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QUEEN'S FOLLY.

BY STANLEY J. WEYMAN.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE RETURN OF A SASH.

OR an hour or two there was some doubt how it might go with the wounded man, and the anxiety which was felt, below stairs as well as above, spoke well for his popularity. At a time when many of the characteristics of the fop still clung to his class, the bluff manners that the Captain had learned at sea might have incurred dislike; and in a household strange to his ways he would probably have been condemned offhand. But in the house which had known him both as the Master George, who with pinched lips but dry eyes had exchanged the comforts of home for the tender mercies of the cockpit, and as the Captain, posted amid the flaming glories of the Nile, he was regarded more indulgently; and this although man and maid flew at his bidding, and he was known to be capable on occasion of hurling a boot at his servant's head. But the man had served with him; and if Onions's stories of the state in which his commander lived, and the awful and lonely dignity he maintained when afloat, meant anything, the boot should have taken high rank as a compliment.

To quote Onions: 'Orders, bless your innocence, man! He don't give no orders! He just looks, and the swabs of lieutenants slips down to leeward and sings out a-trembling! Orders! No, no more than the King in his crown! All as you'd ever hear in a twelvemonth 'd be "Three dozen, my man!" or "Close action!" says he, and shuts up his glass, as you or me might spit on our hands. "Lay her aboard!" says he. "The men may cheer now!"'

However, an hour or two put an end to doubt, the bullet was extracted, and by noon the surgeon pronounced him weakened by loss of blood, but out of danger. The house breathed again, and turned with zest to the discussion of details. Onions, who had

stood sentry at the parting of the paths, told his tale, and within an hour his story and the part that Rachel had played in it were in all mouths.

And below stairs only one conclusion was drawn from it: that the little governess was at the root of the trouble. Amazing, incredible! That trumpery! But what else could they think? Mrs. Jemmett alone declined to believe in the story, and scolded Bowles for upholding it.

'Nonsense, man!' she said. 'D'you think the gentry has no eyes in their heads to quarrel about the likes of her! Or that that rake-hell of a Colonel that knows more than he ought of half the Lady Jennies in London—and light skirts they are, the one half of them!—would look at her! And the Captain who hasn't a word to throw at a petticoat, be it ever so! Though I'm thinking there's one ready enough to listen to him, and that's Miss Froyle, and no other.'

'It's her eyes,' said the butler sententiously.

'And you think that they quarrelled about them!'

'I wasn't there to see, ma'am,' Bowles replied patiently. 'All I say is, it looks like it.'

Mrs. Jemmett rubbed her nose. 'She's a pretty sly puss if it is so.'

'Well, if you ask me, Mrs. J., there's more about her than you think for. What took Mr. Girardot off all of a sudden? You tell me that!'

Mrs. Jemmett stared. 'Why, goodness gracious, man, you don't mean to tell me as she's carrying on with all three of 'em? And her with nothing to her and not half the looks of Jane the housemaid, that is good red and white at any rate!'

'Well, who lives the longest will see the most,' said Bowles. It was a favourite saying of his and earned him a reputation for foresight.

Meanwhile above stairs, where they should have known better, the theory won its way on higher authority. Naturally the first person to be questioned was Lord Robert. But the beau could say no more than that the Captain had flung a glass of wine in Ould's face, and that mediation had been out of the question. Further, that Ould's second had told him that there was a woman at the bottom of it; and that was all that Lord Robert could say.

But what woman? My lord, curious and foreseeing a lasting joke against his sedate brother, went to the fountain-head and, as soon as the Captain was in a condition to talk, put the question.

'Deuced glad it's no worse, George,' he said. ' Devilish glad ! But who's the lady ? Not Charlotte Froyle, I'll go bail ! Why, I'd as soon go to war about a piece of bread and butter—and dry at that.'

Not seeing as clearly as he might have seen whither this was tending, Captain George hastened to clear Charlotte. ' Miss Froyle ? ' he said with gusto. ' Lord, no ! '

' Well, if it wasn't Charlotte, who was it ? '

' Oh, stow it ! ' This time George spoke with irritation, his face, which was paler than usual, taking a tinge of colour.

' But put her out, and there's only—by gum, George ! ' My lord grinned abominably. ' I see ! The little governess, by Jove ! So we weren't far wrong when we roasted you, eh ? Damme, I'd a sort of a notion of it from the time she boarded you that morning—outside, you remember ? And Ould, the old sinner, was trailing the same petticoat ! Well, I am hanged ! '

' Oh, stow it, Fred ! ' the Captain repeated uneasily. ' And whatever you do, for God's sake keep a still tongue ! ' But he did not deny the charge, for he saw now that my lady alone remained, and her name must be kept out at all costs. It would never do for Fred to learn that they had fought about her, while he who should have defended her honour stood aside and did nothing.

So presently down goes my lord bursting with the jest—never had he had such a pull over his Joseph of a brother as this !

It was so good a thing that, in spite of George's adjuration, he could not keep it to himself. As a rule he avoided a *tête-à-tête* with my lady much as he would have shunned a snow-bath in January. But this was so great a joke that for once he broke through a reserve that was born three parts of shame, and one part of a reluctance to leave the primrose paths in which his feet were entangled. He burst into her sitting-room and blurted out with great enjoyment the story of George's backsliding.

My lady was transfixed. For a moment she had entertained a darkling and most unwelcome suspicion that she was herself at the bottom of the trouble. Of this the news relieved her. But it wounded her in her affection for George and grieved her on his account ; and, alas, it lowered him in her eyes. Were no men to be trusted, then—were they all alike ? And so frigidly did she listen that my lord, chafing at her prudery, was glad to beat a quick retreat. He went still mumbling his joke with apparent enjoyment, but—confound it !—how different she used to be, he thought, how gay, how responsive. And for a brief moment, as he looked back, the primrose paths lost their charm.

In Lady Ellingham's case the first result of this confidence was that she avoided her governess. She could not believe, knowing as she did the truth about the Girardot matter, that the girl was a party to this, or was truly to blame. But she was perplexed and suspicious. She had been prepared to thank Rachel frankly, and warmly, for her action of the morning, unfortunate as it had turned out. But with this on her mind she refrained, and Rachel drew her own conclusions and was unhappy, taking silence for condemnation, and in her solitude dwelling on, and exaggerating, the mistake that she had made. She fancied that she read reproach in Priscilla's eyes.

Ann, it is true, chose to regard her in the light of a heroine, and hung upon her a good deal. But as Ann's admiration took the form of questions, equally plain-spoken and embarrassing, it worried her more than it cheered her. In her life apart she became in these days a little of a republican, thinking bitterly of the divisions of rank and the cold manners of the great.

And then one morning a wonderful thing happened. Lady Ellingham appeared in the schoolroom at noon, and, without any greeting, 'Miss South,' she said, her tone constrained, 'Captain Dunstan has been moved into my sitting-room to-day. He is well enough to sit up, and he wishes to see you. Perhaps you will come down with me now ?'

Feeling that the world was nearing its end, Rachel murmured something—that she was glad that he was better—of course she would do anything—

'Very well,' said my lady curtly. 'Then will you follow me?'

Still wondering much, Rachel did so, and a minute later found herself face to face with a Captain Dunstan who, in his dressing-gown and slippers and with the tan gone from his face, looked strangely unlike himself. He bobbed up from his easy chair and bobbed down again. 'Thank you, Kitty,' he said. 'Sit there, Miss South. I got my lady to fetch you just to—to tell you what I thought of you, d'you see. Well, d'you know, you made a precious mess of that business, young lady? More haste, less speed, eh?' He smiled grimly. 'You will know better another time, and not sheer in where you are not wanted, I fancy.'

'I am very—sorry,' she murmured meekly. Lady Ellingham's eyes, pitilessly fixed upon her, confused her. 'But indeed I did my best.'

'I believe you,' he replied with a chuckle. 'I am told that you

ran like a hare, kicking up behind. Onions says a hare'd be nothing to it !'

' I hadn't time to think,' Rachel pleaded, with a hot face.

' And so were just in time to play the devil with us, eh ? And after all,' he continued, with a queer searching look at her, ' got no thanks, I hear ? '

' I didn't want any ! ' she answered with a spirit of resentment. Those cold eyes of Lady Ellingham's—she would not have minded so much if they had not been on her all the time. And to what was this tending ? Why had she been sent for ? To be scolded ?

Apparently not, or not that only, for, ' Well, you deserved them,' he said, his eyes smiling. ' You ought to have had your name read in general orders for carrying out instructions. And so I have told Kitty. If anyone was to blame she was. D'you understand, Miss South ? You acted like a—like a—'

' Midshipman ! ' my lady suggested in an enigmatic tone.

' Well, a devilish good one ! Yes, about that.'

Rachel, blushing with surprise, murmured something incoherent—she was sorry that she had acted in haste—was sorry that he had been hurt.

' Can't play at bowls without rubbers ! ' he rejoined. ' But see here, young lady—where is it, my dear ? Give it her.'

Lady Ellingham, always with the same air of acting against her will, took a sash from a table and handed it to Rachel.

' But this isn't mine,' the girl stammered. ' I think there has been—indeed this is much finer stuff.'

' Yours ? Gad, ma'am, it isn't yours ! Yours was spoiled—finished ! Finished for good and all. You should have thought of that ! Didn't you ? '

' Of course I didn't ! ' she protested, speaking more freely than she had spoken before.

' I believe you ! ' he retorted. ' You wouldn't ! But that's yours now. And shake hands, young lady. We've been on the field together and—'

' George,' my lady struck in rather tartly, ' you've talked enough for this morning. Take your sash, Miss South, and run away now.'

' You're a devilish plucky girl ! ' the Captain said, sinking back in his chair. ' But I knew that before.'

' Thank you very much,' Rachel answered. She was moved almost to tears.

'The boot is on the other foot !'

The girl escaped then and ran lightly up the stairs, smoothing the soft texture of the scarf with her hand. Her republican notions had melted into thin air. Her heart was full, she was overflowing, simple little soul, with gratitude.

Since her last parting with Girardot her thoughts of him were wholly changed. She had seen him as he was, plainly and almost openly seeking her ruin, and she shuddered as she pictured him. But of the lover—of the lover of the former time—she still, and in spite of herself, had long thoughts. She still at times wrestled with the memories of a past happiness. His presence—not as he was, but as she had imagined him—still haunted her pillow, the sweetness of his voice still melted her, his laughing eyes still at moments drew the heart from her, she still with shame thrilled at the remembered touch of his hand.

But the charm and the ache were growing a little and a little less with every day, as other thoughts and other cares dragged at her. And to-day, in particular, if her heart still throbbed and smarted, it was more dully. She thought of him less on this evening than on any evening before, and she slept at night without dreaming of him.

CHAPTER XXIII.

AN UNEXPECTED SUMMONS.

THE departure of Ould was not felt by the party. No one loved the man, and, though the wit that is spiced with ill-nature has its use in preserving Society from insipidity, some one must smart for the general good. But Captain Dunstan's confinement to a sick-room was felt. His downright opinions and his bluntness provided variety. If he was not witty he provoked wit in others, and his return to the dining-table, which was delayed by a three days' visit that the others paid to a neighbouring house, was an occasion of some festivity. The servants wore their brightest faces, the two ladies an additional jewel or two, wine from his favourite bin was decanted under the chaplain's own eye, and Lord Robert, no longer in awe of Ould's caustic tongue, prepared to enjoy himself.

During dinner the Hunt Ball and the Manydown Assembly, at which the party had been present, were reviewed in all lights. Miss Froyle was quizzed on her conquest of a rustic squire, and the

question whether my lord should have worn his Yeomanry uniform or the Hunt coat was redebated. The talk grew more nimble as the wine passed round, the parson's face began to shine, and, when the King's health had been drunk with all the honours, Bobbie saw his chance and gave a toast.

'Bumpers all,' he cried, 'and a forfeit for the ladies if they pass it. It's a most discreet toast. It commits no one, it probes no secrets, it removes no screen! It is reticent as Mrs. Fitzherbert, my lady, mysterious as Udolpho, and as dark as the Monk.'

'But more decent, I hope!' the chaplain muttered.

'As decent as you like! The ladies may drink it without a blush, and my reverend friend without his cheeks becoming a shade more rubicund.'

'Well, what is it?' my lord inquired. 'To it, Bobbie! Hie in.'

'What is it?' Bobbie repeated, raising his glass. 'I know no more than you do! I know no more than you do, but I give you The Unknown Cause!'

'The Unknown Cause?' my lady repeated, puzzled.

'To be sure, The Unknown Cause! But as George knows it, he can drink the toast or not, as he chooses. The Unknown Cause, ladies and gentlemen, and no heel-taps!'

Lady Ellingham saw too late what was intended, and she reddened with annoyance. Miss Froyle stiffened—she best knew why—my lord laughed, much tickled, while the Captain grunted 'Oh, confound you, Bobbie!' and Sir Austin murmured 'To be sure! To be sure!' and waited for light.

But the ladies' disapproval was pronounced, and it so checked the merriment that the chaplain was thinking how he might best bring off Lord Robert with credit—such little services were a part of his office—when Sir Austin, whose brain always lagged behind, said the very thing that he should not have said.

'By Jove!' he suggested blandly. 'Ought we not, with her ladyship's permission, of course—this with an old-fashioned bow in her direction—to have the little governess down? On such an occasion, eh?'

My lord choked in his glass. 'Why, Froyle, you are a wizard!' he said. 'You put one and one together as if you were Cocker himself! Well,' and his eyes twinkled with mischief, 'you had better ask Kitty.'

But my lady frowned. 'I think,' she said frigidly, 'that Miss South has done enough mischief already. She would be as little in place here as she was on that unfortunate morning.'

'She meant well,' growled the Captain. But he looked at old Froyle as if he could have strangled him.

However, that brought all of them on him. 'Not a doubt of it!' my lord said slyly. 'She meant well!'

'Not a doubt in the world!' Bobbie assented, grinning.

'Rixae pars magna fuit,' smiled the chaplain.

'Angels rush in where Bobbies stand aloof!' my lord chimed in, his eyes dancing.

'Oh, confound you all!' George retorted, very red in the face. 'Confound you, leave the thing alone! We've had enough of it.'

'Quite enough!' said my lady. She looked at Charlotte, who silently but heartily agreed, and the two rose together. The men had to drop their joke and rise also. Bobbie moved to the door to open it, but was anticipated by the unexpected entrance of Bowles. 'If you please, my lady,' he announced, 'Miss South wishes to see you for a minute.'

'Talk of the devil!' the chaplain exclaimed, and even Lady Ellingham was startled. She lost her composed air. Coming on the top of what had just passed, the application was untimely. 'Why?' she asked coldly. 'What is it? Miss South should know that this is not an hour at which I see her.'

'I beg your ladyship's pardon,' the butler said, 'but an express letter has come for her. I understand that her mother is ill, and Miss South wishes to go at once. The chaise that brought the letter was ordered to wait for her, that she may catch the night coach at Salisbury.'

'Indeed?' my lady said. She spoke in an altered tone. 'Indeed! I am sorry. Very well. In my room.'

She went out, following Charlotte Froyle, and the men, with various ejaculations of sympathy, settled down to their wine. 'Odd!' said one. 'Devilish odd!' agreed another. 'She'll have a confoundedly cold journey, poor girl!' said a third, as he set down his glass. 'Where does she come from?'

'Exeter way, somewhere,' my lord explained. 'Aunt Elisabeth found her.' Then, feeling that the girl was no longer a fit subject for jesting, he diverted the talk, and within a minute she was to all appearance forgotten. A match between one of the earl's horses and a neighbour's four-year-old was discussed and bets were made.

But an hour or so later the girl's case came to the surface in an unforeseen fashion. The men, pretty sober on the whole, had been some minutes in the drawing-room when Captain Dunstan, who had

lingered behind, entered with a hasty step. He approached his sister-in-law. 'Did you see the letter?' he asked, speaking with more than his usual abruptness.

My lady looked up, at a loss for a moment to understand what he meant. 'What letter?' she said. 'Oh! Miss South's, do you mean? Yes, I saw it.'

The letter was, indeed, lying on the table beside her, for the girl in her haste and distress had left it behind, and Lady Ellingham had brought it into the room to show it to Charlotte. Miss Froyle's eyes, as my lady spoke, wandered bleakly to it, and, though she did not speak, the Captain followed her glance, saw the letter, and took it up. He read it without ceremony. 'It says the chaise is to wait for her?' He spoke roughly as if he blamed some one.

'Well, George?'

'That she may catch the night coach at Salisbury? For Exeter?'

'Yes. What of it?'

'Well, this. There is no night coach from Salisbury for Exeter. It runs only in summer.'

'Eh?' my lord exclaimed, overhearing. 'What is that?'

'There is no night coach from Salisbury to Exeter!' George insisted, striking the letter with his hand. 'I've looked in Paterson.'

'That's odd,' Lady Ellingham said. But, having said it, she was content to shrug her shoulders. It was silly of George to make such a fuss about the girl! But the men's attention was caught, and they looked inquiringly at him.

'What does it mean?' the Captain demanded. 'The letter is written by the doctor. Says her mother has had a cere—cerebral attack, whatever that may be, and that if the girl wishes to see her alive she must return in the chaise and catch—I'll tell you what! This letter is a d—d fraud! I don't believe a word of it! There's no night coach, and you—you ought not to have let the girl go, Kitty!'

The accusation fell sharp among them. He spoke harshly, making no attempt to hide his feelings, and Charlotte reddened with vexation. My lord went out without a word, evidently to consult Paterson for himself. My lady let her work fall into her lap. 'Nonsense, George,' she said quietly. 'You are romancing.'

'But there is no night coach!'

'The writer may have made a mistake.'

'But every one has a Paterson!' Paterson's *Road Book* was, be

it said, the Bradshaw of that day. 'And that's not all. There's the indorsement.' He turned the paper over. '"To be forwarded from Salisbury by post-chaise, which will await orders at the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Ellingham's, all expenses paid. Urgent, very urgent." Why all this arrangement? Did the man suppose that Fred had no horses?'

'But it seems a wise arrangement,' my lady contended. 'See how quickly Miss South got off.'

'To catch a night coach that doesn't run?'

My lord came in. 'No, there is no coach,' he said. 'It certainly looks fishy. What do you fellows make of it?'

'A mistake,' my lady said equably. 'George is exciting himself about nothing.'

'I'm hanged if I am!' George exploded, his angry eyes challenging opposition. 'Post through?' he retorted, in reply to a suggestion. 'Ten to one she hasn't the money!'

Lord Robert had an idea and he launched it. 'I'll tell you what it is,' he said. 'If it is as you think, I'll wager there's a man at the bottom of it! Eh? What do you think? Don't you think so?'

The Captain turned on him, but before he could annihilate him, 'And perhaps,' the chaplain said, 'the young lady was not quite in the dark either.'

George whirled about, but, 'Gad, you think she was fly?' said my lord.

'A put-up thing, I expect!' agreed the chaplain, less discreet than usual. 'At any rate,' he hedged hurriedly as the Captain's baleful gaze again shifted to him, 'it looks like it to me.'

George, tormented on all sides, opened his mouth, but before he could find words strong enough, 'To be sure, to be sure!' said Sir Austin, catching the idea at last. 'I see. The young lady knew what she was going to?'

'You've got it, Sir Austin,' said Bobbie, smiling.

George found voice. 'Well, I'm d—d!' he cried. 'I tell you what it is! You are all as bad one as the other! You're a set of longshore chatterers—worse, begad, than a lot of prating scandal-mongering bumboatwomen! I've not the patience to listen to you! Can't you see? Haven't you eyes? You've seen the girl. Isn't it a hundred times more likely that some one—ay, some one of your kidney, confound you!—has laid a false course for her and—'

'And set a trap for her?' broke in my lord. 'Well, I don't know, George. Women are queer things, my lad.'

'The women you know are!' George snarled, and, muttering something very unfit for the ladies' ears, he strode out of the room, slamming the white-and-gold door behind him with a violence that set the pendants on the chandeliers jangling.

Lord Robert grinned, while my lord, struck thus treacherously under the ribs, looked foolish. The other men exchanged glances and shrugged their shoulders. 'By Jove!' said Bobbie, lowering his voice, 'I'm afraid that George is a case. I'm afraid he is.' He shook his head sapiently. 'Comes of going to sea,' he added.

'Pon honour,' Sir Austin ventured, 'it looks to me very much as if—I really begin to think that George——' and then my lord trod on his toe.

The Countess rose with an impassive face. 'It is ten o'clock,' she said. 'Shall we go, Charlotte?'

'I think it is time,' Charlotte assented, in a tone that expressed more than her words. The two rose and retired, and the men, left to themselves, had their say about it, and sniggered a little at George's expense. But a few minutes later, as they crossed the hall on their way to the billiard-room, my lady descended upon them, her feelings for once written on her face.

'Fred!' she exclaimed, addressing him with less of form than she had used with him for a twelvemonth, 'George is gone!'

My lord stood. The rest paused to listen. 'Gone?' he repeated. 'Gone where?'

'Gone after her! And he's not fit.'

'The devil he has! How's he gone?'

'He's taken Medea.'

'Taken Medea!' my lord exclaimed, and now he was really roused. 'Taken Medea, and the ground as hard as iron! If he lames that mare—by gad, but I can't believe he'd do such a mad thing! Confound him! Are you sure, Kitty?'

'They say so. They say that he went straight to the stables, had her saddled and rode off. Bowles ran after him to try to stop him, but was only in time to see him pass the gate.'

'Confound the little baggage!' my lord cried, honestly angry for once. 'She'll be the laming of that mare, and I've backed her for the Ringwood Cup.'

'I wish I could think,' said my lady darkly, 'that she will do no more harm than that!'

CHAPTER XXIV.

MEDEA TO THE RESCUE.

IT was true. George had taken Medea, though probably no one else in the house, not even my lord, could have drawn the steeple-chaser from her stall for such a purpose. But the Captain's savage eyes had wrought the miracle, though not without trouble, nor until he had fretted away five intolerable minutes, stamping to and fro in the blackness under the great chestnut tree that stood in the middle of the stable-court; the tree that of sunny noons had sheltered generations of stable brats at play—infants chuckling on their backs as they stared up at the sun-flecked foliage or boys stringing cobs—but at night was a Cacus cave sheltering for the same children unknown horrors.

In the end, and reluctantly, Tom had put an end to the Captain's suspense. He had led out the mare, and raised his lanthorn, so as to throw its light on the Captain's face, and assure himself that he was sober. For Tom was quaking in his shoes at the thought of Mr. Coker, the studgroom, and what that great man would have to say about it in the morning.

' You know she's entered for the cup, Mr. George,' he said, as Medea flung up her head and hung back in the doorway, her eyes glistening in the light of the lanthorn.

' D—n the cup ! ' the Captain said, gathering up the reins and lifting himself to the saddle.

' Well, for God's sake, have a care, sir ! The ground is hard, and I dunno what Mr. Coker will say ! '

Mr. George's answer was lost in the clatter of the mare's hoofs as she sidled over the gravel. Tom walked beside her, throwing the light before her, and would fain have pressed home his warning. But before he had screwed up his courage to say more, the mare broke away into the night, plunging and shying. The light glinted a last time on her sleek quarters, the man heard the Captain steady her to a sharp trot, he lowered his lanthorn. ' Grant she come to no harm ! ' he said. ' But I shall catch it sweetly for this ! Confound him, as if no other nag would serve his turn ! ' And most devoutly Tom wished as he went back to the stable that he had not been on duty.

Meanwhile the Captain turned his mount on to the turf and gave her her head. He had a good seat for a sailor, and it was well that

he had, for Medea was fresh, the cold air tickled her, and this unwonted brisk among the shadows of the night was a treat of which she was bound to make the most. The lines of trees that flanked the avenue, though she knew perfectly well what they were, gave her noble pretexts for shying, and a dozen times she broke away with a joyous flout of her heels and tore through the cold delicious air with a spirit that tried the Captain's strength to the uttermost. Once a rabbit, scurrying under her nose, really upset her ladyship's nerves, and her rider only saved himself with a hand in her mane. But he steadied her again with voice and rein, rode presently clear of the forest land and cantered across the far-stretching open moor at a steadier pace.

By and by he would have to take to the road, and he knew that it was hard, and he thought of Fred and the cup. But he crushed down the qualm—what mattered a horse, even Medea, beside that which he believed was at stake? He swore savagely under his breath, took a tighter hold of her and pressed her on. His full strength had not come back to him, and he was sweating as if he had ridden a race.

He had reckoned that the chaise had an hour's start of him, and he believed that he could overtake it—if that were all. But that was not all. The thing that most troubled him, that harassed and tormented him, and more than once almost led him to draw rein, was doubt.

What if, after all, he were a fool and the whole thing a mare's nest? The letter might be genuine, the mention of the night coach a mere error, and all that he had raised on them a structure of over-heated fancy—a house of cards! If that were so, he had started out on as silly a goose-chase as any man, crazed by his imagination, had undertaken! And he would never hear the end of it.

Or worse still—if those confounded cynics with their poisonous tongues were right? If there was a plot and she was a party to it, the purpose of it that she might escape and join her lover! He knew all about Girardot; my lady had told him, had hastened to tell him. And the doubt would force itself on his mind, though he swore again and again that he knew the girl, and that she was not one to sail under false colours, that her face and her eyes gave the lie to it! He had witnessed her courage in the wood, he had been touched by her dignity when that vixen of an Ann had struck her, he had seen her, instead of swooning, take the sash from her own waist, he had watched her a dozen times, when his eyes and his mind

were apparently elsewhere. And he would not believe that she was of that kind. That she could plot and lie for so vile a purpose.

And yet—if she were in love? There was the crux. Always the thought came back to him—what would not a girl do for her lover? And that rascal of a tutor was so wily, so good-looking, so smooth! Was there anywhere a man more likely to twist a girl round his fingers? Even a good girl with eyes like still pools, and lips that trembled at a harsh word?

The Captain groaned, eased the mare up the slight rise by Picket Post and felt the breeze strike more freshly on his brow. He drew rein on the farther slope and listened. Darkness flowed over the depths below him as softly and silently as the limpid stream that, unseen, swayed the long weeds in the bottom of the valley. An owl hooted in Ridley Copse on his right, but its note was so much a part of the night that it did but deepen the stillness. Beyond the valley a long pale line of sky marked the horizon, and some way beneath it a gleam of light betrayed the houses of Ringwood. But no sound of hoofs or skidded wheels rose from the road below him, and with a sigh and at a more cautious pace, with something of indecision in his movements, he began the descent.

A quarter of an hour later he trotted into the sleeping village, saw a stream of light pouring cheerfully from the door of the White Hart, and he pulled up. The sound of a horse at that late hour drew the landlord to the door, and 'Has a chaise gone by, Jervis?' the Captain asked, throwing as much indifference into his tone as he could manage.

'Lord, sir,' the landlord cried, recognising him. And he came out to his stirrup. 'Is it you, Captain? Who'd ha' thought of seeing your honour as late as this? And you in bed, I thought? A chaise? Ay, to be sure, sir, twenty minutes ago. They stopped to water.'

'Who was in it?'

'On'y a young lady, sir. From the Folly, I understood—for Salisbury.'

'Oh!' The Captain's voice was flat. 'Very good.' He turned Medea's head for home. 'Forgot something, that's all. Too late now. Thought I might come up with her here. Good-night, Jervis.'

Jervis called after him, inquiring if he would not take something. But the Captain only waved his hunting-crop in answer. He was already retracing his steps along the street. He kept the mare at a foot pace for a time, but as soon as he was clear of the houses

he gave her her head and trotted smartly on, sitting low in his saddle. A mare's nest? Yes, it looked like it, since no one had joined her. And how he would be roasted for rushing a hunter through the night, and all for nothing! The sooner he got the mare home and safe the better.

But when he came, a third of the way up the hill, to the smithy at the cross-roads, he halted. Why had they stayed to water at Ringwood? Ringwood was hardly seven miles from Queen's Folly, and there could be no need to stop—for man or beast. Was it to leave evidence, if they were followed, that the girl was alone and that all was above-board? The Captain swore, and sat for a moment undecided. Then impulsively he turned the mare's head into the forest road on his left, struck her smartly with the crop to enforce his will upon her, and sent her along by the by-ways that on that side of the valley skirted the lower slopes of the Forest towards Fordingbridge. They would serve his purpose as well as the main road, and be shorter and softer. He had lost twenty minutes of precious time, and had himself to thank for it.

The by-road ran under trees and was dark and rough, but it was soft, and wherever he could safely do so he cantered the mare. He passed through North Poulner, by Moyles Court, lying lonely and dark under its weight of tragedy, through South Gorley, rousing all the dogs in the hamlet, he forded the Ickley brook, and at North Gorley turned to his left and got upon the main road. There he took to the turf at the side and galloped, riding the harder for the doubts that plagued him and the indecision that weakened him. He was in a fever to settle the question; and if he had not turned back once and repented of it, he would have whirled about a dozen times, as a dozen times he called himself every kind of name for starting on such a hare-brained chase.

But to go back now while there remained the slightest uncertainty seemed worse than to persevere. And at length he saw a light ahead of him, in some sick-room perhaps, and quickly he clattered over the long causeway into Fordingbridge, the sliding water glinting darkly below him. He halted before the Greyhound, wedged in on his right between bridge and river.

And here again he was in luck. The house was awake; an ostler came out at once in answer to his hail. Again he inquired if a chaise had passed—a chaise for Salisbury.

The man threw the light of his lanthorn on horse and rider. 'Ay, to be sure,' he said. 'They be gone no more than half an hour.'

'They changed horses here ?'

'Ay, they did. Anything wrong, mister ?' The man's curiosity was raised. He fancied that he knew the gentleman, but he could not put a name to him. The horse, however, was beyond denial: it was such a horse as he had not seen for a twelvemonth.

'One or two travellers ?' the Captain asked.

'One or two—— ?'

'Were there one or two inside ?'

'Two, to be sure. A gentleman and a lady.' Again, 'Anything wrong, mister ?'

A long pause. 'Did they get out ?'

'Narra one.'

'You are sure there were two ?'

'Well, I see 'em,' the man answered drily. 'They looked to be two. And in a mortal hurry to get on. What about 'em, mister ?' He raised his lanthorn for a clearer view.

The Captain turned his back and slid stiffly to the ground. 'Nothing,' he said. 'Bring half a bucket of oatmeal and water, luke. And be sharp about it.'

The sight of half a crown quickened the man's movements, and he was back in two minutes with the bucket. 'That's a gay fine mare,' he said, as he held the pail on his knee while Medea blew delicately on it, in doubt of its cleanliness. 'You've ridden her too !'

The Captain tightened a girth. 'Ay,' he said, his head under the saddle-flap. 'The lady left no message here ?'

'Narra a word ! Kep' out of sight, if you ask me.'

'I meant to meet them here,' the Captain explained, as he turned to watch Medea quenching her thirst in her dainty fashion. 'And I'm too late.'

'Well, you've made haste too.'

The Captain did not answer. He swung himself up, handed over the coin, and turned for home. 'Good-night.'

He paced slowly away into the darkness, and passed again over the long causeway where the wind from the marshes nipped him and chilled his blood.

But the chill without was nothing to the chill within; the rushy flat through which the water flowed and whispered beneath him was not half so cold and dead as the spirit within him. So, after all, the candid eyes and the soft tremulous lips had been lies, the woman's common wiles that took in foolish men ! And she had—

she had been that kind of girl ! Her looks that had seemed so open, her artless manners, her gentle dignity, all had been but so many false lights set up to lead men on to shoals and rocks and shipwreck. And when she had been most open, then she had been most cunning, laughing in secret, marking with shrewd derisive eyes the stupid seaman as he tacked to and fro, masking his clumsy course.

She had affected solitude and forced a tear to her eye the while she plotted how she might most quickly join her lover ! She was that kind of girl.

And with it all, with all her address, a fool ! The rider's chin sank lower on his breast. For he might not know women—here indeed was the proof, the damning proof that he did not. Kitty, even Kitty might deceive, might be every day deceiving him. But he did know men, and Girardot with his handsome face, his laughing eyes, his glib tongue, was an open book to him. Quickly, quickly would he tire of his easy conquest, and then what would be her fate ? Something between a groan and a curse escaped from the Captain's lips, and he struck Medea—Medea, who had never offended him.

CHAPTER XXV.

TWO IN A POSTCHAISE.

RACHEL sank dry-eyed into the corner of the chaise. The lofty lighted doorway of Queen's Folly and the figures about it vanished, the rattle of the wheels over the fore-court changed to a dull rumble, the shadowy lines of trees flitted past. But the girl's one, her only thought was that she was on her way at last—though indeed little time had been lost—that the grim race with death had begun.

She counted the hours that lay before her ; she measured the suspense. And the immediate past, with its doubts and fears, its passion and fever, fell away from her like a cloak put off. The persons among whom her life had lately moved, whose esteem or dislike, praise or blame, had been all in all—ay, and among them even he who had caught her heart, toyed with it, and wrung it—faded into dimness, became shadows without import, mattering nothing. Only one thing mattered. The tender, lined face that had looked its last on her from the wooden porch of that humble cottage by the sea, the veined hands roughened in her service, the mother voice—these were all that concerned her now, were all her world. And she

was going to lose them. Oh, that she had never left them ! That she had known how to value them, how to cherish them, and with every day and hour to lay by some dear remembrance of the love that could never be replaced ! Oh, the time that she had wasted !

Tearless, staring into the darkness, she clasped hand in hand, drawing at intervals deep and painful sighs, as memory, ruthless and cruel, stabbed her, recalled impatient words, ungracious looks, a selfish act, the wilful choice of her own pleasure. Little things, lightly weighed and as quickly done with. But the sting of them rankled now, now when there might be no place for repentance, no room to make amends, no impassioned words whereby to prove her love, her boundless gratitude ! Now, when the heart, so tender and so forgiving, might already be cold, and the work-worn hand lie nerveless !

She could only pray, voiceless and wordless, pray that she might be in time ! She could only send her heart—and indeed it seemed as if she could send her heart !—before her.

She was not as yet impatient. The hour for impatience was not yet come. The end of the journey lay so far away. When it approached, then indeed she did not know how she would bear the waiting, or live through the last hour of suspense. At present she had but to endure.

A little white-faced girl, lost in the darkness of the chaise that itself, with its feeble lights, was but a moving atom in the vast of night. Yet within her a world of emotion, of thought, of purpose, ceaselessly revolving.

Presently she felt the carriage stop, saw lights and figures through the dim glass, perceived that they were watering the horses. Again the chaise jolted on, the lights slid back, once more the horses were pounding along the dark road. On her right a gloomy line of woods rose to a sky but a shade lighter ; and, had she been in her everyday mood, her lonely position must have presented visions of peril to her mind. She would have seen in every clump of trees a highwayman, and trembled where the night was deepest. But she had passed beyond those fears.

And this was fortunate, for ten minutes later, as she sat patient in her corner, the unexpected happened. She heard a cry—twice repeated. The carriage came slowly and, it seemed, unwillingly to a stand. She caught a word or two. Then the door beside her was plucked open, a dark form for an instant filled the gap, sprang in. The door closed, the chaise bounded forwards, and, trembling with indignation, she uttered a cry of protest, and shrank into her

corner. Her first thought was that the postboy had taken up a fare—as they did at times where they dared to take a liberty. But at night and when she was alone !

Before she could speak, 'Do not be alarmed,' said a voice that went through her like a sword thrust—alas, a too well-known voice. 'I can explain, indeed I can explain. I can make all clear. I heard at Salisbury—'

She was dumb with amazement—with amazement so great that for a time it left room for no other feeling.

'I heard at Salisbury—at Salisbury,' he stammered, making no effort to combat the nervousness that moved him. 'I was at the White Hart, and I heard that a chaise was starting for you—that it was to bring you back. I pictured you alone, in sorrow, grieving, and I could not bear—oh, Rachel,' he pleaded, 'you may think it impertinent, uncalled for, wrong if you will ! But I could not bear that you should travel so—alone ! I came to meet you—only, believe me, to see you safe to the coach ! Only to be sure that you were not frightened, not molested, were not—'

She had only one thought, to remain mistress of herself ; and, thank God, that was easy. 'It was unnecessary,' she said, her voice cold as ice. 'Quite unnecessary, Mr. Girardot.'

'But it was natural ! Say that it was natural ?' he urged. 'I could not help it. You must see that it was natural—and forgive me.'

She was trembling with indignation, but with no other feeling. That—all that was dead in her ! She had not been sure of it until now—now when she heard his voice, and the only emotion that it awoke in her was anger at his untimely, his cruel intrusion. 'You might have met me at Salisbury,' she said.

'And been'—he threw all the anxiety he could into his deep voice—'been hours in agony lest something should happen to you !'

'That is nonsense !' she replied in the coldest of tones. 'Nothing was likely to happen to me.'

'I could not know that. How could I know that ? And I could not bear the suspense, or—or the thought that you were in trouble and that, though I might never see you again, I might be of use to you ! Might leave some kindlier remembrance behind me—go from you with at least one word of forgiveness ! It was that—and surely, surely it was natural that I should come if I had not a heart of stone !'

His voice shook with the force of his pleading. But Rachel was

beyond the power of that voice. She only grew harder and colder with every word that he said, with every moment that passed. She felt—and it was a proof of her inexperience—no fear. She did not suspect that he had another motive for intruding on her than that which he declared, or a purpose beyond that which he avowed. But she felt that his presence was an outrage, and that the manner in which they had parted should alone have forbidden the step that he had taken. He had not thought of her, nor of the harm that his company might do her, but only of his own gratification. And her voice was freezing when she spoke. ‘It was wrong,’ she said. ‘I can protect myself, Mr. Girardot. I ask you to leave me.’

‘What?’ he replied. ‘You would have me get out here? In the road—in the night? You cannot mean it?’

She longed passionately to be free from him, but ‘Then at the next stage,’ she said with firmness. ‘You should not be here. You should not have come.’

‘I meant well,’ he said.

But she was not moved. She did not answer. And he had at least, he reflected, made good his footing; he must not frighten her. He held himself as far from her as he could, and he was careful not to touch her. He had anticipated more alarm, more suspicion—and also more agitation. He had feared that she would discern the weak place in his tale and inquire how he came to know that she was in trouble, since the outside of the letter, even if he had seen it, could not inform him of that. But Rachel, engrossed in her grief, had forgotten that it was not known to all the world.

Now if he could keep his seat beyond Fordingbridge, if he could lull her suspicions just a little longer—but he would not, he dared not anticipate or give his imagination rein. With his pulses beating furiously, with intoxicating pictures dancing before his eyes, he must still restrain himself, for to anticipate, to snatch at the fruit before it was ripe, would be fatal. She was so near that he could almost feel her breath upon his cheek! He had only to stretch out his hand to touch her, to take her, to cover her with kisses! But the time for that was not yet: he must crush down the temptation. He must think only of Fordingbridge. Once past that . . .

It came, and came so quickly that he had little time for thought. A light or two glimmered before them, they were on the long bridge, they were passing over it, with the sullen water lapping the piles below them and the river mists deepening the night. They stopped

abruptly before the lighted doorway of the Greyhound, and the crisis was on him. If fraud failed he must fall back on force—were it possible.

‘ Surely you will let me come on to Salisbury ? ’ he began. ‘ If you wish it I will leave you short of the city. But I cannot bear to leave you alone, here.’

‘ No ! ’ Rachel cried passionately. ‘ Leave me here, sir, I beg. Get out, if you please ! I insist on it.’

‘ But why ? ’

‘ Mr. Girardot ! ’ Her voice trembled with anger. ‘ If you are a gentleman you will leave me when I ask you. It is not fitting, it is not right, sir, that you should thrust yourself upon me.’

‘ She fears herself,’ he thought, and he hugged himself. Aloud, ‘ But indeed, indeed,’ he pleaded, deprecating her anger even while he persisted, ‘ it will do you no harm if I get out short of the city. Of course,’ he continued, as she seized the handle of the door, and tried to turn it, ‘ if you appeal to the stablemen, they will put me out. But—I am thinking of you, not of myself ; is it worth while to have a scandal ? When I have come so far to be of service, and my only desire is to see you in safety ? What do you fear ? ’

‘ Nothing ! ’

‘ Then why,’ he retorted with a flash of humour—the handle was stiff and she had failed to turn it—‘ do anything so desperate ? Why force me to walk ten miles ? ’

She hesitated, and, to gain time, he rose. ‘ Well,’ he said reluctantly, ‘ if you will have it so ! But it is an ill return—an ill return for my—my anxiety.’ He pretended to feel in the darkness for the handle, and, while she waited for him to open the door and descend, the chaise moved abruptly, swung onwards from the inn door, the lights passed behind them, they were off again.

‘ Oh ! ’ she cried, in helpless resentment, ‘ you should have got out ! You should have got out ! It is base, sir—base of you to force yourself on me ! ’ Her voice trembled with indignation, for she felt that he had outwitted her.

‘ Base ? ’ he repeated softly. ‘ Base ? Oh, if you knew, Rachel ! ’

But his words were lost in the rumble of the wheels and she did not catch them. And after all, it mattered little, very little ! She was ashamed to think that her mind should have been diverted even for a second from the object of her journey—that she should have forgotten even for a moment her mother ! Her thoughts reverted to the cottage, to what might be passing there ! And, alas ! what might not be passing there while she bandied words about trifles

that mattered not ? What sacred moments, what trials of fortitude, what scenes of distress ? She thought of Ruth, called, child as she was and alone, to meet such awful issues, to catch her mother's last words, to receive the last pressure of the loved hand. Ah, with what passion, in what a sad embrace would they two meet, would they melt in one another's arms !

For a space—for how long Rachel never knew—she lost herself in such musings. She forgot the present, she forgot even her companion—or, if a thought of him intruded, she reproached herself. She was standing in the dear room with the latticed pane and the sloping floor and the faded dimity hangings—standing by a dying bed.

Oh, why had she gone from her ? Why had she left her mother and wasted those months that might have been spent by her side, spent in fond attendance on her, in loving care of her, in making atonement for past heedlessness ?

She was brought back and sharply to the present. A horse stumbled and, recovering itself with a scramble, jolted her in her seat. She peered out. Trees, their trunks sliding by in the lamplight, overhung the road, their branches swept the sides of the chaise. They were passing through a wood, ascending too, climbing steeply on a narrow road, a rougher road than she remembered. She tried, looking out of each window by turns, to probe the gloom, and her heart that had been so low beat a sudden alarm. Doubts assailed her, and for the first time apprehension. She tried to recall the road from Fordingbridge—surely there should be low meadows on her right, water-meadows stretching far on either side of the river. And no wood ! 'Where are we ?' she exclaimed, her words a challenge.

Her quiescence had puzzled him, but it had been in his favour, and he had been glad to let her be. Now that the question which he knew must come sooner or later was put, he was prepared for it. 'There is nothing to alarm you,' he said, 'and much to relieve you. If you will listen to me—if you will listen to me for a moment, I have good news. I have the best of news, dear Rachel—for dear you are to me, though you forbid the word: news that will relieve that tender heart and dry those tears, that will—'

'Why are we off the road ?' she cried. She was frightened now—frightened at last. There was that in his honeyed tone that admitted deceit, that betrayed an abyss, that fell into line with the dark woods, the narrow road, the labouring horses.

' I am going to tell you,' he said in the same deprecating tone. ' Only—oh, Rachel, do not be angry, do not be angry with me. What I have done, what I have to confess, my own, my dearest, I have done out of love, overmastering love that I could not—that no man could have resisted ! And have no fear. You are as safe with me, day or night, here or elsewhere, as—'

' No,' she cried, clapping her hands. ' Why are we off the road ? That is the question. Answer it, sir ! Answer it ! I am going to my mother, and she is dying ! Do you understand ? There is not a minute to lose in folly, sir, if I would see her alive ! ' Her voice was hard as iron.

' You will see her alive ! ' he said quietly. ' You will, you will, and many times, I trust. But say, say first,' he continued with passion, as he brought all his powers into play to move her, ' say that you forgive me ! That you forgive me for the trick that I have played you in the madness of my love ! If I have deceived you—if I have for a moment wrung that tender breast—'

' Mr. Girardot ! ' She spoke in a voice that he did not know. ' If you do not tell me the truth at once I will break the window and appeal to the postboy ! This is odious ! This is intolerable ! '

' He would not heed you,' he replied coolly—for all must come out now, and the more quickly the better. ' And it were a pity to wound that little hand. But, dear spitfire, hear me, and, as I love, forgive. Your mother is not ill. She has not been ill.' Rachel uttered a half-stifled cry. ' She is as well as you are. I have deceived you—yes, I have deceived you. But if I have caused you pain, short-lived pain, think with pity—oh, Rachel, think,' he repeated with fire, ' of one whose pain is lasting, who suffers and sees no cure but at your will, and who found no means of pleading with you save this ! Oh, my dear, some mercy, some softness there must be in that woman's breast ! '

But Rachel had ceased to listen. She had broken into a passion of weeping, deaf to his excuses, heedless of his presence. For the moment, in the immensity of her relief, one thing only appealed to her, one thing only was of import. Her mother lived ! Her mother lived, and she would see her, would clasp the loved hand, hear again the accents of that voice. In the revulsion of her feelings and her thankfulness she lost sight of her previous fear, forgot her position, recked nothing of his presence. And even when, as she grew calmer, she fell to earth again and awoke to his voice and the desperate pleading he continued to pour into her ears—when with

a shock she recognised his treachery—it was a hard, pitiless anger rather than alarm that at first possessed her.

But he did not know that ; and he had triumphed too often to despair. He had welcomed her tears, not understanding their cause, for they bridged over the awkward moment, they won him time. And the more deeply she was moved, the more he hoped. In the troubled waters he looked to fish with success—the woman moved was the woman half-won. So, receiving no answer, no repudiation of his suit, he was deceived into thinking that she wavered. And he was careful not to touch her, not to alarm her, though the temptation to draw her to him, to crush the slender form in his arms, to seek her lips, was almost more than he could withstand. But he did resist it : that and all would follow if he were patient. She sobbed, and he supposed that she listened. So had women sobbed and listened, and, sobbing and listening, had yielded. Presently she would find her voice, plead, protest, deny ; and then he would know how, by gentle force, to win consent. Or, if she still would not yield, he would point out her position, the night, his presence and what the world would say of it. He would prove to her that the Rubicon was passed already, her good name gone, all lost—save love !

He had gone through it before, proved it, tried it. Yet would he omit no precaution that experience suggested. And after all, she was at his mercy.

They had passed out of the wood before she grew calm ; they were crossing a wild common, set sparsely with undergrowth that fringed the road. And still she did not speak—but she might be wavering. He could not distinguish her face, so dark was it, but he could picture it, and, as his confidence grew, so did the lure of her form—so near that he had but to put out his hand and she was his. It was a shock when at last she spoke, and her voice rang sharp and shrewish.

‘ Stop, sir, and let me out ! At once ! At once ! ’ she cried.

Her firmness took him aback. It was not what he had expected. But, ‘ My dearest, dearest Rachel,’ he protested, ‘ it is impossible ! Even were you so hard, so heartless, if you had so little feeling or pity for me— ’

‘ If you do not let me out,’ she said wildly, ‘ I will throw myself out ! ’ And she struck the glass of the window. ‘ Do you hear, sir ? If you are not utterly vile, you will suffer me to get out, or you will leave me ! ’

‘ Alone ? ’ His tone was almost mocking now. ‘ In this waste,

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to perish of cold ? Never ! Listen, dear heart, listen ! You are safe with me—'

' I do not think so ! ' she retorted. ' And you—do you not yet understand, sir, that I loathe you—loathe you were it for nothing else but the cruel, the heartless trick that you have played me ! Let me out ! Let me out, sir ! Or I will throw myself out ! '

He heard her fumbling for the handle, and, though he did not believe that she would carry out her threat while the carriage was moving at speed, the excuse served him. ' So you are stubborn, are you ! ' he replied, his anger roused. ' Softly, softly ! We are not at an end yet ! ' And he found and seized her hand and drew her forcibly towards him. She uttered a cry, and with her free hand she struck the glass furiously, shattering it.

' Stop ! Stop ! ' she screamed. ' Help ! '

' Dear, dear little fool ! ' he said, and easily mastering her—for what could she do in that space ?—he drew her to him. She struggled, and then, panting, desisted. ' Frightened little heart,' he murmured. ' Heart of my heart, what are you afraid of ? See, I do not harm you. I do not hurt you. I do but prevent you harming yourself. Those little hands were never meant for that, but to be cherished, fondled, kissed, adored ! '

She gasped, helpless, despairing. But even in that desperate strait she kept her wits, and his words suggested something. ' Oh, the blood ! My wrist ! ' she cried suddenly. ' My wrist ! Give me a handkerchief ! ' Terror rang in her voice. ' For pity's sake a handkerchief ! I shall bleed to death ! '

Alarmed, he released her for a moment and felt for his handkerchief. ' Now that comes, ' he said reproachfully, ' of obstinacy. I told you that those little hands were never meant—'

But, ' Oh, a light ! ' she sobbed hysterically. ' A light ! It is bleeding—bleeding over me ! I shall die. '

He folded the handkerchief, and the moment he gave to that task, which required the use of both his hands, was fatal. In the darkness she had found the handle, and this time she succeeded in turning it. As he leaned towards her with the handkerchief, she hurled herself bodily against the door. It gave way, and she flung herself recklessly from the carriage, the grasp that he made at her skirt missing her by inches.

He swore and shouted. ' Stop ! Stop ! ' he cried.

(To be continued.)

THE SCHOOL-DAYS OF CARDINAL NEWMAN.

BY HENRY TRISTRAM, PRIEST OF THE BIRMINGHAM ORATORY.

IT was characteristic of Cardinal Newman that, from his earliest days, he kept with scrupulous care every letter and paper that might illuminate the record of his life ; he seems never to have destroyed anything. In his later years he was conscious that such *documents intimes* would be of supreme importance to the biographer as a corrective of false or distorted views disseminated either through prejudice or from ignorance ; but the habit had been formed in early childhood and persisted throughout his life. These memorials of himself and his friends, however, he preserved not only for the sake of future generations, but also for their own intrinsic interest to himself ; and at frequent intervals during his life he recurred to them, added brief marginal notes, and jotted down the dates at which he read them again. Most men shun such records, and prefer that the past should live only in memory, because memory is often kind and the regrets that endure are distilled through the alembic of the years. But to Newman the past lived in the present, and its memorials were a constant joy, not an abiding sorrow. Because he treasured its flotsam and jetsam, he was able to regard it not only in retrospect, but also, as it were, face to face.

This peculiarity of his has provided a rich mine in which the biographer may dig for his material. From his schooldays there remain diaries, copy-books, prizes, magazines, many of them bearing the annotations of later years ; even the Verse Book containing the 'Cross and Rosary,' to which he attached such significance in the 'Apologia,' still exists. Some of this material he made use of in the 'Autobiographical Memoir' he wrote in 1874, but much of it has been passed over both by himself and his biographers.

Among the papers so religiously preserved there remains a fragment apparently of a school prospectus, which sets out to enlist the sympathetic interest of the public by making the following ambitious claims :

'From its spacious and commodious premises, rebuilt a few years ago especially for School purposes, together with the high scholarship and well-known scientific and literary attainments

of the Principal and Assistant Masters, this old School¹ is well suited to supply the want of a Suburban Institution of high character, combining the advantages of Eton and Harrow, and the other great Schools of Ancient Learning, with the more practical benefits of the best mixed Schools of the Metropolis—King's College School, the City of London School, and others of similar standing.'

To this is appended a list of 'former pupils,' among whom figures the name of J. H. Newman, Oriel College. To his name curiously enough the note 'Tract 90' is added, apparently as his title to fame, but surely this could hardly have been a recommendation in the eyes of the Paterfamilias of the day; it is significant that no mention is made of his conversion, *fait accompli* though it was. This—Great Ealing School—was Newman's first and only school. But the imposing and somewhat bizarre edifice, illustrated at the top of the Prospectus, was not the school known to Newman; he has drawn lines across the picture and added in the margin the note: 'This School House is a new concern on new ground.'

In Newman's day the school occupied what was known as the Old Rectory, near St. Mary's Church, standing some distance back from St. Mary's Road. The site on which it was built is now traversed by Ranelagh Road, and the playing fields are covered with more or less modern houses. The ancient buildings were demolished almost entirely in 1852, because the woodwork had become infected with dry rot. But before this the school had been transferred to a large house, built specially for the purpose away from the church and nearer the village of Ealing.

At the beginning of last century it was a school of established reputation, perhaps not as old as it claimed to be, but certainly old enough to have proved its worth. A private establishment, founded by a Mr. Pierce, it passed from him in 1768 to his son-in-law, the Rev. R. B. Shury, of Christ Church, Oxford, and from him again to his son-in-law, the Rev. George Nicholas, Newman's headmaster, who raised it to a position unique among schools and made it the largest private educational establishment in the country. During the period when Newman was there, it was steadily growing, until it numbered some 300 pupils, and new buildings, as we learn from his Diary, were being erected for their accommodation. The school flourished simply and solely because it provided a good education. It does not seem to have stood

¹ It claimed to have been founded *circa* 1698.

for any original educational ideal ; it was conducted on Eton lines, but perhaps its proximity to London helped it. To a certain extent it was what we should now call a Preparatory School, for the majority of pupils, who were destined for the Universities, proceeded to the Public Schools.

For a school of this character it produced an amazing number of distinguished men in all walks of life. Most distinguished of them all, if we except Newman, was Thackeray, but his time there was short and perhaps troubled. The hero of 'Henry Esmond' spent days of unhappiness at Ealing and played with other boys on the Green ; and in his 'Papers' Dr. Nicholas is referred to as Dr. Tickle-us of Great Ealing School. At a later date Huxley passed two years there between the ages of eight and ten, but refers to this period rather disparagingly as 'two years of a pandemonium of a school.' His father was an assistant master towards the close of Dr. Nicholas' *régime*, and the condition of the school does not seem to have been as flourishing as it had been during his prime. Among other distinguished old boys may be mentioned Horace Mayhew, Charles Knight, Francis Newman, Captain Marryat, W. S. Gilbert, the two Rawlinsons, the three Selwyns, George Alexander Macfarren, Lord Truro, Lord Chief Justice Thesiger, the two Lawrences, the two Sales, and Hicks Pasha—surely a considerable list for a period extending over hardly more than half a century. In this connexion one unique member of the staff must be mentioned ; this was Louis Philippe, afterwards King of the French, who, settling in England at Twickenham, taught geography and mathematics at Ealing and elsewhere. But he left England the year before Newman entered the school.

This important event took place on May 1, 1808, when he was a child not yet quite seven and a half years of age ; and the boy remained until the end of 1816, when on December 14 he matriculated at Oxford, although he did not actually go into residence until the following June. Apparently he was intended for Winchester, but he did not wish to leave Ealing ; why, we do not know, but we may suppose that he had grown attached to the place. It was a mistake, as he realised in later years, and as Dr. Nicholas admitted in a letter congratulating him on the Oriel Fellowship. The comparative mediocrity of his undergraduate career was largely due to his extreme youth, and, if he had proceeded to Winchester, he would not have gone up to Oxford until the proper age. At Ealing no provision was made for boys after sixteen.

Two books of his remain from this period, one read just before he went to school and one a little after. The first is 'An Easy Introduction to the Arts and Sciences,' by R. Turner, of Magdalen Hall, Oxford. In it he wrote the following note in 1854 :

'This book I had at Ham, i.e. before September 1807. I have just received it from T. Mozley and on opening it at pp. 186-190 I recollect perfectly rhodomontading out of it to my nursery maid in the shrubbery there, near the pond, at the end of the diagonal of the paddock or path from the house, and telling her that when I was at Brighton I had seen four different fish, describing from pp. 186-190 the whale, the shark, etc. . . . and when she could not make out what the fish were and guessed wrong I said "it was a whale, it was a tortoise" which I saw.'

The second has the title 'The Visit for a Week, or Hints on the Improvement of Time, containing original tales, anecdotes from natural and moral history, &c. designed for the instruction and amusement of youth by Lucy Peacock.' In this Newman has written two notes at the same time :

'I must have had this in 1808 or 1809. I was in the little school at the time, and I was out of it by June 1809; I cannot tell how much before.'

'I was in the little school at Ealing when this book was given round to us to read in class. I believe the date to be as I have put it in the beginning of the book. Instead of keeping it for school-time as a lesson, I put myself in the large open window, my legs hanging out or along it, and read it right through or at least as far as time would allow. I have often thought of this book and thought it was lost for ever. I was thinking of it only a week or two ago. It has just come to me from T. Mozley. April 17, 1854.'

His correspondence during these early years is formal rather than revealing, and consists entirely of letters, very carefully written in a large round hand and probably dictated by a master, to announce to his parents the date of his return home. The following, his first letter from school, may be taken as a specimen of several :

'Ealing, June 3rd, 1808.

'DEAR MAMMA,—I am very glad to inform you that our Vacation commences on the 21st Inst. when I hope to find you all well.

'I am, Dear Mamma,

'Your dutiful Son,

'J. H. NEWMAN.'

But he was fond of annotating his exercise books with remarks extraneous to the matter they were intended to contain, often expressed in Latin and sometimes with a superb disregard of grammar: *e.g.* 'Sum ire domi minore tempore quam hebdomada. Huzza. Utinam irem domi cras.' One note of this nature scrawled on the cover of a copy-book may be quoted, because with the clinging to the past that was so marked a characteristic of his he returned to it time after time during his life and made additions, until it has become an epitomised autobiography.

'John Newman wrote this just before he was going up to Greek on Tuesday, June 10th, 1812, when it only wanted 3 days to his going home, thinking of the time at home when looking at this he shall recollect when he did it.'

'At School now back again.'

'And now at Alton where he never expected to be, being lately come for the Vacation from Oxford where he dared not hope to be—how quick time passes and how ignorant are we of futurity. April 8th, 1819, Thursday.'

'And now at Oxford, but with far different feelings—let the date speak—Friday, Feb. 16th, 1821.'

'And now in my rooms at Oriel College, a Tutor, a Parish Priest and Fellow, having suffered much slowly advancing to what is good and holy, and led on by God's hand blindly not knowing whither He is taking me. Even so, O Lord. Sept. 7, 1829, Monday morning, $\frac{1}{2}$ past 10.'

'And now a Catholic at Maryvale and expecting soon to set out for Rome. May 29, 1846.'

'And now a Priest and Father of the Oratory, having just received the degree of Doctor from the Holy Father. Sept. 23rd, 1850.'

'And now a Cardinal. March 2, 1884.'

Newman was certainly alive to the significance of the moment that passes even in face of the eternity that abides.

But these later entries of Newman's have led us far from the subject of this article, and it is time that we return once more to his early school-days. At the beginning of 1810 his mother presented him with a pocket diary, in which he wrote: 'J. Newman, presented to him by his kind Mama. A.D. 1810.' This gift led him to keep a record, very brief, of the salient events of his daily life at school, interspersed with occasional attempts at verse, moral maxims and jottings of a like nature. This custom he adhered to for four years, but only extracts, made by himself

at a later date, now remain. They are of interest because they enable us to trace his progress in his studies. 'As a child he was of a studious turn and of a quick apprehension, and Dr. Nicholas, to whom he became greatly attached, was accustomed to say that no boy had run through the school, from the bottom to the top, as rapidly as John Newman.'¹ He was the reverse of athletic, and as the games were neither organised nor compulsory he shirked all forms of active exercise; the only form of relaxation recorded in his diary during term-time was an occasional walk. He early essayed the art of composition. 'In the year 1812,' he wrote later, 'I think I wrote a mock drama of some kind—also, whether included in it or not, I cannot recollect—a satire on the Prince Regent. And at one time a dramatic piece in which Augustus came in.' On May 25, 1810, he began Greek, and simultaneously was promoted to Ovid. His first Greek reader was a selection from 'Æsop's Fables,' prepared for the use of the lower forms at Eton, which he began in the autumn of 1811, and finished on April 13, 1812. Meanwhile he had been reading Vergil, commenced on November 16, 1810, and from February 11, 1811, doing Latin verse. On May 25, 1812, he began Homer, and a year later Herodotus. This was something of an achievement for a boy between the ages of ten and twelve, especially when, to judge from his Diary, Latin themes and verse compositions² occupied much of his time, not to mention music and other subjects. Evidently boys were forced then more than they are now, and the hours of work a day were considerably longer.

Newman won his first prize in 1811. It was for speaking, and the book given him was Lamb's 'Tales from Shakespeare.' On the fly-leaf of this he wrote: 'We were allowed to choose our prizes for speaking. I chose this. My second choice was Denon's "Travels," and it was long before an English abridgment of the book could be found, such as was reasonable in price. Afterwards I chose Milton. Afterwards Cowper's "Homer." In his Diary, under

¹ Mozley, *Letters and Correspondence*, i. 26.

² Newman drew up a list of subjects given for verses and introduced it with the remark: 'I set them down for two reasons—because, I think, many of them are happy, and secondly to show that they and the verses were not taken from a book. Indeed, I know, the verses, good or bad, were done without any assistance whether from book or master or English.' They were not translations, but free compositions. Some of the subjects were topical: e.g., 'Velleseleus (Wellington) picturas etc recuperat, Napoleone expulso'; 'Napoleon ad sororem suam' (from St. Helena); 'Proelium Vaterlooanum'; and one certainly intriguing, 'Conjuratio Papistica' (Gunpowder Plot). Of his verses only a few are preserved: e.g. 'Religio Poetica' and 'Equus fractus, ad mortem damnatus, herum alloquitur,' on the latter of which he notes: 'Observe this was one of those copies of verses in which I used to gain credit by reiterated? and!'

the date May 29, 1812, he marks his disappointment by the entry : ' Could not have Denon's " Travels "—therefore had Bruce's.' But eventually he did receive an English unabridged translation of Denon in two octavo volumes, in which he afterwards wrote : ' When I was a boy I chose Denon's " Travels " for a prize which was to be given to me at school, not knowing it was a large work. I was obliged to put up with this.' But did he, a boy of eleven, expect to receive Denon's ' Voyage dans la basse et la haute Egypte,' which was originally published in two folio volumes with numerous plates ? If not, why should he have spoken so disparagingly of the English translation, which professed to be complete ? It is interesting to observe *en passant* that these prizes of his remained in the publisher's binding and were not bound in the orthodox tree-calf.

The Duke of Kent, Queen Victoria's father, lived within walking distance of the school and took great interest in it.¹ He used to be present on the great day of the year—Speech Day. It was literally a speech day, and the boys were put up to recite passages of prose and verse, in Latin, Greek, and French. The programme which the long-suffering parents had to face was a formidable one, and seems usually to have contained twenty items. Once at least the monotony was broken (or varied) by a mock debate, which purported to have taken place in Parliament in 1734. On one occasion Newman did not fulfil the hopes entertained of him, because his voice was beginning to break, but the Duke swept aside the Headmaster's well-meant apology with the kindly compliment, ' But the action was so good.' These speeches were delivered in the morning of the third of the ' grand nights.' In the evenings a play of Terence was acted. Newman was given a part for the first time in 1813. The play was the *Phormio*, and he took the part of Hegio. The incidents leading up to his first appearance can be traced in the Diary :

- ' Aug. 10. Had a part in the play given me.
- Sept. 12. Scenes put up.
- 15. Rehearsal in dresses.
- 18. Rehearsal in dresses.
- 21. Rehearsal before boys.
- 22. Do. do.
- 23. First Grand Night.
- 24. Second.
- 25. Speeches in morning (play in evening).'

¹ He lived at Castle Hill Lodge, and used to play whist with Dr. Nicholas.

In 1814 he took the part of Pythias in the *Eunuchus*, in 1815 of Syrus in the *Adelphi*, and in 1816 of Davus in the *Andria*. Apparently the grand nights took place alternately in June and September. In 1820, when he was in his third year at Oxford, the *Andria*¹ was performed, and he, with much diffidence, contributed the Prologue. The writing of Latin verse had been a regular part of his school work, but in his covering letter to Dr. Nicholas² he apologised for using hexameters, because he 'could not make anything of longs and shorts.' At Ealing he had mostly been confined to elegiacs, and this was the first copy of heroics he had attempted since leaving school.³ Moreover his Finch examination was approaching, and mathematics, 'a science perhaps not the most favourable to the composition of verse,' claimed his time, as examinations at Oxford were comprehensive and less specialised than they became later. His subject he did not find inspiring, for electing to ignore the performance which followed, he confined himself to panegyrics of George III and the Duke of Kent, both recently dead, and subsequently added a few lines of greeting to George IV on his accession. He failed to write to his own satisfaction a passage that would serve as a transition to the play, and the four final lines in different handwriting are probably the work of Dr. Nicholas, who revised and in some details corrected the whole composition. These experiences of his school-days explain how it came about that at his own foundation in Edgbaston he, in conjunction with Fr. Ambrose St. John, who himself came from Westminster, where the Latin play was an institution, revived, and showed the greatest interest in, the performance of Plautus and Terence.

Many years later Newman wrote a note on the *cacoethes scribendi* which seized him when he was fourteen and found vent

¹ In MS. copy he says it was the *Adelphi*.

² We may presume that Newman kept in touch with his Headmaster. Certainly once he was taken to Ealing by his father (Easter, 1818) on their way home from Oxford. Mr. Newman was so overwhelmed by the compliments paid him on his son's ability by the Rev. T. Short that he could not forbear a visit to Dr. Nicholas to inform him. Writing nearly sixty years afterwards, Newman could remember nothing of the interview except that Dr. Nicholas repeated to them an epigram, with an English translation, on a boy who made a false quantity in Euphrates.

"Venit ad Euphratem Morgan; perterritus haesit;
Ut bene transiret, corripuit fluvium."

'He came to Euphrates; it made him to shiver;
To cross over safely, he abridged the river.'

³ The Scholars of Trinity used to send in copies of Latin verse and prose every week, but apparently not hexameters, only elegiacs and epigrams.

in a manner normal to the literary schoolboy, the publication of manuscript periodicals. The one noticeable fact about these ventures of his is that they lasted for so long a time. At one period, for instance, he edited two opposing papers, the *Spy* and the *Anti-Spy*, which ran to thirty and twenty-seven numbers respectively. In this he was probably assisted by a club of senior boys, called 'The Spies.' At least he has preserved a caricature, drawn by 'our enemy Daniel' and entitled 'The Monitorial Spies,' in which Newman appears as Sophocles reading a paper called *The Spy*. When they expired, he projected the *Reformer* and the *Inspector*, but they came to nothing. The Spy Club next turned its attention to the issue of the *Portfolio*, the name being given by G. Adams, the eldest son of the American Minister at the British Court, who lived at Ealing and had three sons at the school. The second, years later, returned to England as American Minister. Mr. Adams himself contributed to the *Portfolio*, and Newman preserved some verses of his called 'The Grasshopper and the Ant.'¹ The *Portfolio* was in turn succeeded by the *Beholder*, which was the longest lived of them all. Newman considered it the best of all his school efforts, but very little of it has been preserved, but a pastoral, in which he himself appears as Tityrus and a boy named Thresher

The Grasshopper and the Ant.

The Grasshopper all summer long
Had spent her day in idle song,
But soon the blast of winter felt;
Then, numbed with cold and pinched with want,
Crawled to the cell where Mother Ant
In comfortable plenty dwelt.

'Dear Ant, I starve' (with piteous tone
She thus began to make her moan);
'A famine rages in the land:
Oh, from your treasures condescend
One thimbleful of corn to lend,
And Heaven shall bless your bounteous hand.

'And ere next harvest day comes round
I'll make that thimbleful a pound,
If ever grasshopper spoke true.'
'Friend,' said the thrifty Matron, 'pray,
While I was toiling night and day,
This hoard to gather, where were you?'

'Dear Madam, I was wont to sing;
I made the fields with pleasure ring.
Amusement was my sole employ.'
'To sing!' replied the prudent dame,
'Forsooth, a pleasant summer game.
Now then, go dance; I wish you joy.'

as Meliboeus, deserves quotation. He was only fifteen, it must be remembered, when he wrote it.

SCENE—*Playground.*

Tityrus. Here as we sit and view the boys at play
Rejoicing in their sunbright holiday,
While some at fives attack the patient wall
And others glory in the bat and ball,
Be our employ in philosophic ease
Calmly to eat the scanty bread and cheese,
Which black-eyed Johnson o' the untidy cap
Cuts off for two-pence to each hungry chap,
And, to beguile away the ling'ring time,
To choose some subject, gay or grave, for rhyme.

Meliboeus. Oh, who can sing without a theme for song ?
Tit. And who can choose so many themes among ?
To fix our wandering Muse, we will engage
To sing of Terence and his attic page.

Mel. Worthy the subject ! For we have essayed
To act the classic plays the Afric made ;
And we've beheld you with your altered mien
The Pythias, Syrus, Davus of the scene—
And I've attempted Mitio's gentle air,
And Simo's anger at his spendthrift heir.

Tit. Sweet is the notice that proclaims that all
May lie in bed until a later call ;
Sweet is December's first, or first of June,
That shows the holidays are coming soon ;
Sweet is the hour which hails th' incipient rule
Of the new captain of our numerous school ;
But far more dear the glad auspicious day
The Dr. tells us we may have a Play.

Mel. Grievous the quarter bell which makes us rise,
And don our clothes and wash our face and eyes,
Grievous the day when back to school we go
And leave our home with ling'ring steps and slow ;
Grievous the time when with relentless weight
The birch descends, stern minister of fate ;
But far more grievous is the burdened hour
That says with savage joy ' the play is o'er.'

Tit. Oh say ! In future days, what fate's decreed
For you and me and all who skim these mead ?
Behold the mind intuitively soar
And long to scan the various scenes in store ;

Mel. The thought would wear us out with groundless hope
 And mad impatience if we gave it scope.
 Heighday ! What quick transition have you made !
 How long has moralising been your trade ?
 Thus ends our verse, so let the doggrel die
 As it began—without a reason why !

But there was another aspect of Newman's life at school, without some reference to which this account would be incomplete. His religious upbringing had been nebulous and indefinite ; he learned his catechism and read the Bible, but he had 'no formed religious convictions' until he was fifteen. The decisive change that occurred then was due to the influence of the Rev. Walter Mayers, a graduate of Pembroke College, Oxford, but a man of no great intellectual attainments, or, at least, without any university distinctions. He had joined the staff of the school as a classical master in December 1814, but his educational work he regarded as a sad necessity, and he deplored the time devoted to tuition as 'injurious to his spiritual state and no less prejudicial to his ministerial usefulness.' Towards the end of Newman's school-days chance brought the master of twenty-six and the boy of fifteen into intimate association with each other, for the latter remained at school after his friends had left. The result of this intimacy was that Newman passed through the spiritual crisis which he called conversion, and emerged a definite Evangelical. On the last day of 1816, just after Newman's matriculation, Mayers presented him, as a parting gift, with a copy of Beveridge's 'Private Thoughts,' 'as a token of affectionate regard,' and in the letter which accompanied the gift referred to the many conversations they had had on religious matters. Almost sixty years later (October 14, 1874) Newman wrote on the fly-leaf of this gift book :

'This work is not mentioned in my "Apologia" because I am speaking there of the formation of my doctrinal opinions and I do not think that they were influenced by it. I had fully and eagerly taken up Calvinism into my religion before it came into my hands. But no book was more dear to me or exercised a more powerful influence over my devotion and my habitual thoughts. In my private memoranda I even wrote in its style.'

In fact at sixteen he was composing what he calls 'quasi-sermons' in the style of Beveridge. Of them only the texts remain, but they suffice to show that the problems of sin and its punishment,

of ascetic practices as a safeguard, of the mysteriousness of our being, of the nothingness of man in the face of the immensity of God, on which his mind lingered in later years, were also the theme of his youthful thoughts.

These notes on Newman's school-days may appear disconnected, disjointed, and scrappy, but they bring out certain points of interest, passed over as unimportant by his biographers, whose attention is fixed rather on the grown man and his position in the world of thought than upon the immature boy, groping his way through adolescence to the fullness of manhood. They enable us to form a mental picture of the youth who presented himself at Trinity in June 1817, somewhat solitary and apart, as always at school, but feeling intensely the pangs of loneliness amid new scenes and with strange companions, a good classic and a competent mathematician, anxious not to lose a moment of time before settling down to further studies, more eager to obtain information than his tutors were to impart it, and inclined to be scandalised at the social side of University life.

TALES FROM THE PERSIAN GULF.

BY BRIGADIER-GENERAL H. H. AUSTIN, C.B., C.M.G. D.S.O.

IV. MILCH COWS.

RAHIM DAD was lost to us for some time in the wilds of Bashakard. As that region had become the hiding-place of many Afghans and coastal Baluch miscreants, who were in our black books for having taken a prominent part in the gun-running operations of the season, one could well picture the crafty rogue thoroughly at his ease among his former fellow-conspirators. He would, doubtless, explain that he, too, was a fugitive from justice ; and had assumed his present disguise in order to make good his escape from our attentions. Now that he was surrounded by friends again, however, he proposed to dwell peacefully with them until the hue and cry after him had subsided.

Meanwhile, with the object of still further agitating the Baluch inhabitants of the coast, the transport had sailed from Jashk as soon as the force was re-embarked there, and disappeared into the gloom. Out of the blue it had suddenly emerged next day at Chahbar, 150 miles to the east of Jashk. A portion of the troops was landed, and a demonstration made in favour of the British telegraph station and small garrison of Indian infantry there. This *enclave*, too, had been for some time threatened by a large body of Afghans, temporarily settled in the hills near by, as a reprisal for arms captured at sea. The Baluch residents of Chahbar town being duly edified by a sight of the *fauj*, the troops again vanished. They dropped in from nowhere at Sirik, some 250 miles to the west of Chahbar, a day or two later, and had since continued the motion.

These surprise visits kept the whole coast-line from Bandar Abbas to Gwatar in a state of feverish uncertainty as to where the *fauj* might next be landed. Extreme caution was therefore imposed on all who had hitherto gloried in the arms traffic ; and particularly on those Afghans still hanging about Masqat and Matrah in the hope of getting arms across the sea. No *nakhuda* could be prevailed upon now to undertake so risky an adventure in

face of the fresh combination at sea. Such Afghans as had previously wandered at will along the Biaban and Makran coastal plains deemed it prudent to make themselves scarce, when news of the capture of the arms landed at Lash spread throughout this portion of Persian Baluchistan. They departed, therefore, with their camels to the shelter of the rugged hills and valleys of Bashakard, bordering these narrow sandy wastes.

Thus a comparative calm settled upon the scene about Jashk for a while, as Afghan and Baluch were up against a formidable proposition which caused much scratching of heads and thinking. Consequently, I could imagine Rahim Dad, the expert, being frequently consulted by his Afghan associates in Bashakard as to what was to be done now. But what advice he was likely to give them in their dilemma was not easy to guess.

There was one aspect of the situation, however, with which I was not entirely satisfied, and that was the presence of Rahim Dad's confederates of the nautch incident, thirty in number, whom we had imprisoned in the Persian fort at Jashk under suitable sepoy guard. We had been feeding these rogues now for close on three weeks ; and it did not seem altogether desirable from the local point of view to continue doing so indefinitely. This matter had been impressed on Rahim Dad before he took his departure for Bashakard ; but he was very loth to have his friends at large just then, and munificently agreed to my setting aside the sum of Rs. 200 p.m. as a maintenance allowance out of the Rs. 2000 he had left with me on deposit after the Lash affair. The only stipulation he made was that those imprisoned should learn casually that it was he who had landed the arms at Lash for the Afghans. There was little difficulty in meeting his wishes, and the prisoners soon became aware that Rahim Dad had bolted from Jashk after the nautch, and brought off the latest successful *coup* near by.

This was satisfactory so far as it went, but the small garrison at Jashk still had to find the guard for the fort, which was a nuisance. So when the Daria Begi, the Persian Governor of the Persian Gulf coast-line, arrived at Jashk shortly afterwards in his steamer, on one of his periodical tours from Bushire to the ports within his jurisdiction, the iniquities of Rahim Dad and the confined Baluchis were brought to his notice.

The prisoners received a severe rebuke in my presence from their Governor, who threatened them with gruesome penalties if they

again transgressed by assisting Afghans in their nefarious designs. On piously swearing that they would never have anything further to do with gun-running, the young ruffians were permitted by the Governor, with my gracious assent, to depart to their homes. Not that I imagined the fervid eloquence of the Daria Begi on the wickedness of gun-running came directly from his heart, or that it would overawe his youthful listeners ; for I had strong reason to believe that his Excellency covertly approved of his subjects amassing money by this means. Much of it would eventually find its way into his pocket in the form of spurious taxes due to him.

That, however, was a detail of Persian administration of which I was not supposed to have any cognisance. Still, I did flatter myself the young prisoners had not found their period of incarceration enjoyable ; and they would certainly be nervous in future when they heard of the surprise visits of the *fauj* at numerous points along the coast. I was not sorry, therefore, to see the last of them ; and the cost of maintenance, Rs. 200, was chalked up against Rahim Dad's deposit account.

As for that monster, the Daria Begi regretted he could not bring him to book during his present tour, owing to the rascal having fled to districts inaccessible to the few *tufangchis* (riflemen) his Excellency had on board his steamer. But he would not lose sight of his misdeeds, should Rahim Dad ever fall into his hands. This undertaking was all eye-wash, as I knew full well. Rahim Dad's past services to us would not have been thus treacherously required by me had I feared the wrath of the Governor descending upon him hereafter. Anyhow, no breath of suspicion could now rest in any quarter on Rahim Dad, regarding his share in our recent successes. And as the gun-running season was rapidly drawing to a close, I hoped that he would be able to resume before long his honoured and unchallenged position amongst the bold skippers ploughing the main between Persia and Arabia ; and, peradventure, assist the British authorities, *sub rosa*, another year.

About this period intelligence from Masqat depicted the few remaining Afghans there as becoming desperate. The time was approaching when they should be setting forth on their return journey to Kabul and Herat, loaded with the thousands of rifles they had counted on obtaining to convert into hard cash—at much profit—on reaching their homes. Yet, so far they had comparatively little to show for their large outlay this season. It was fairly certain, however, that they would not throw up the sponge without

at least one more supreme effort to make good before trekking north ; and the main problem confronting us was what form this effort was likely to take.

Our arrangements for checkmating the arms traffic in the narrow seas south of Ras Masandam were about as good as the necessarily limited means at our disposal permitted. But there was always the possibility of the Afghans and their advisers attempting to break fresh ground in their frantic endeavour to outwit the forces arrayed against them. In order to justify his reputation, and perhaps even his existence, Rahim Dad would probably, as previously hinted, be drawn into the counsels of these pertinacious schemers. One continued to hope, however, that he would not lightly face the forfeiture of his Rs. 1800 in our hands, which might be conveniently regarded as a hostage for his loyalty to our cause.

The calm following the capture of the arms at Lash and the surprise visits of the British force elsewhere, was at length disturbed by news from the Arabian side that divers Arab and Baluch *nakhudas* were conveying arms and ammunition for the Afghans from Matrah to Sohar—a port about 120 miles farther up the Batinah coast. The dhows plied within territorial waters, and travelled by night only.

Later intelligence announced the gathering of many Bedouin camels in the vicinity of Sohar ; and the next move in the game now became tolerably clear. The Senior Naval Officer in the Gulf was made acquainted with the probable intentions of the Afghan gun-runners, and quietly transferred a patrolling cruiser or two from the Gulf of Oman side of the peninsula through the Straits of Hormuz to the waters west of Ras Masandam. We then waited upon events.

One of the difficulties with which we had been faced, when casting our net of intelligence over the Arabian and Persian coastline, was the inaccessibility of most of the obscure ports along the inhospitable Batinah coast. The lack of means for transmitting rapid information from them, even if it had been practicable to establish agents there, was another stumbling-block to maintaining close touch with the wiles of our opponents at these remote fanatical Arab haunts. And though I now had a fairly shrewd idea of what was in the wind, I was glad to receive confirmation of my suspicions from the author of the latest developments, Rahim Dad.

He crept in, as usual, like a thief in the dead of night. His face had resumed its former familiar appearance when he was

ushered into the privacy of my apartment, whilst all around at Jashk were wrapped in slumber. The man was evidently bursting with information, and could scarce maintain his accustomed composure in his anxiety to unburden himself of the stirring events afoot.

During the past few weeks he had travelled far and wide to put in train novel methods, which he had convinced the Afghans were the solution of their difficulties. From Bashakard he had proceeded in their interests to Bandar Abbas. Thence he had slipped across with some Afghans in a friend's dhow to Ras Masandam, and hugged the Pirate coast as far south as Sharjah and Dibai. At the latter port they had hired camels from the Bedouin, and trekked for 120 miles in a south-easterly direction across the sandy wastes of the Oman peninsula to Sohar, on the Batinah coast. Their investigation of this possible route having proved satisfactory, the Afghans and he had entered into a contract with the Bedouin to furnish camels for the transport of arms and ammunition from Sohar to Sharjah and Dibai. From those ports the arms were to be run in dhows to Linge and Khamir, 80 to 100 miles distant on the Persian coast, west of Bandar Abbas. No cruisers patrolled that area of the Persian Gulf, so the trip would be a mere walk-over, Rahim Dad had assured his enthusiastic Afghan friends.

Having unfolded his subtle design, with ill-concealed pride for its boldness and originality, Rahim Dad evidently expected his disclosure would knock me all of a heap. The schemer was somewhat taken aback, therefore, when I congratulated him on his cunning, and informed him that this development had already been anticipated. If he should by any chance find himself shortly in the vicinity of Qishm Island, he would probably run across a cruiser or two on the look-out for dhows in those waters. This statement rather turned the tables on the disappointed purveyor of news, who threw up his hands in resignation and murmured, 'Verily, your honour devours the thoughts of those who try to deceive the Sirkar.'

'You speak truly,' retorted I; 'but tell me what part you are supposed to be playing in this game of hide-and-seek. How came you to give your Afghan friends the slip, in order that you might acquaint me of their evil intentions ?'

'That is easily explained, sahib. Rahim Dad is, alas ! well-known to all that sail these seas'—I could almost swear that the

modest veteran blushed in making this self-laudatory announcement—‘Therefore, is it not seemly that he and his dhow should remain as a decoy where the Anglez have for long been shadowing him ? What more simple, on his return to fit out his dhow at Ziarat for fresh work, than to take Jashk in on his way, unknown to the cows he is milking ?’ His diffidence presumably led him to adopt this impersonal mode of speech.

‘But if you are to run no arms for the Afghans, what profits it you to remain cruising about in these waters to attract our attention ?’ I inquired of our confederate.

‘That is a matter which I have carefully considered and arranged for,’ replied the wily old bird. ‘I have drawn all Afghans into the belief that I am their true friend and helper. As for the young Baluchis you tell me the Daria Begi has permitted to return to Ziarat, they will be recompensed for their imprisonment by receiving Rs. 20 each from me—when your honour has paid me part of what you owe me before I depart hence. Then shall I be at peace with all mankind.’

Even so, it was not very apparent how money was to be made out of his rôle in the forthcoming operations of the Afghans, though I surmised the risks he intended to run during the remainder of the gun-running season would be reduced to a minimum. In any case, I did not propose to pay him for the information vouchsafed unless he became the direct instrument of arms falling into our hands ; and told him so.

He waved aside my objection. The Anglez had been good and kind to him ; they had paid him handsomely for such humble services as he, Rahim Dad, had been able to perform for them. He rested content with what was still due to him from that source. But these ‘cut-throat Afghans,’ they were fair game to feather his nest yet a little more.

For propounding the above scheme, and elaborating all details on the spot for the carriage of arms by sea from Matrah to Sohar, and thence across land to Sharjah and Dibai, the Afghans had guaranteed him a commission of one rupee on every rifle, and eight annas on every box of ammunition safely conveyed to the Pirate coast. There his responsibility ceased, as no further risk was involved in transporting arms thence in dhows to Lingeh and Khamir.

The Afghans, assisted by the persuasive tongue of Rahim Dad, had made their own arrangements with Persian and Arab

nakhudas of that area for running the arms across the Gulf. Meanwhile, Rahim Dad, Salih, and one or two other Baluch skippers of the Biaban coast were subsidised to distract the attention of the British in their usual happy hunting grounds east of the Oman peninsula.

Thus craftily had Rahim Dad withdrawn himself from the coils of the Afghans. Whilst ostensibly playing an important part in the new phase of the operations, there was small chance of his coming to grief in his former haunts, as he would indulge in legitimate trade only during his projected trips to and fro. Nor could he be blamed if matters went astray, once the gun-running dhows set out from the Pirate coast ports for the Persian ones opposite. That rested entirely in the hands of Allah, in the view of our old informant.

Glancing dispassionately at the scheme, Rahim Dad certainly seemed to have engineered himself into a very comfortable position. He admitted as much, with a sly twinkle, when I suggested so much ; but protested that the Afghans could hardly expect him to run arms across to a coast-line with which he was not familiar ! Moreover, he was anxious now to preserve a whole skin, the season being nearly over, so that he might render loyal service to the Anglez in the years to come. He begged me not to be perturbed, therefore, by the apparent activities of himself, Salih, and others in these narrow seas ; and thought it might be well for the cruisers to concentrate their attention in future to the waters west of Masandam.

Before disappearing as silently as he had come, Rahim Dad applied for a sum of Rs. 800 from his deposit account. The greater part of it he proposed to utilise in conciliating the young Baluchis who had been imprisoned at Jashk 'in the cause.' This money he would explain had been received from the Afghans for landing their arms at Lash. Rahim Dad was not often caught tripping in his hazardous association with those who were his unconscious dupes.

This interview cleared the air completely ; and the confirmation of probable Afghan intentions was passed on now as a practical certainty to the S.N.O. for any action he might think desirable in regard to the re-distribution of his ships.

Shortly afterwards, considerable liveliness was reported in the Gulf of Oman. Dhows were frequently sighted, chased, captured, and examined. They were invariably found to contain nothing

but ordinary merchandise, which did not warrant their detention.

Meanwhile, all was quiet off the Pirate coast. Three cruisers lay concealed by day, however, to the west of Ras Masandam, behind the friendly shelter of Hanjam Island. These stealthily patrolled by night; westwards, in the direction of Lingeh; southwards, as far as the Pirate coast; and northwards to Hormuz Island off Bandar Abbas.

For some time these nocturnal prowls failed to disclose any unusual activity along the Arabian coast. Then a cruiser, returning from her beat to the Pirate coast in the small hours of the morning, picked up with her search-light, a bevy of five dhows in mid-ocean, making north in a spanking breeze. She immediately gave chase, whereupon the detected dhows at once scattered. Two changed course to the north-east, two to the north-west, and one only held on her original course, as though she had nothing to conceal or fear.

But the cruiser followed the last, and wirelessed information regarding the others to the ships then probably in the neighbourhood of Lingeh and Hormuz. All save her special quarry, on which the search-light steadily played, rapidly disappeared in the darkness. The fugitive dhow had a long start, however; and as her pursuer was incapable of steaming more than eleven knots, the chase proved a long one. Thus day was breaking before the cruiser got on level terms with her prey off the south-west end of Hanjam Island. The deluded dhow apparently sought to shake off her pursuer by slipping round the island and entering the shallow water along the southern shores of Qishm—ignorant of the fact that behind the Hanjam mass lay the cruiser base. The suspicious craft was soon forced to heave to, and when boarded by an elated party of blue-jackets was found to be carrying an Arab crew, 600 rifles, 200 boxes of ammunition, and their Afghan owners.

Elsewhere, some curious manœuvring might have been observed on part of the two other cruisers. Away to the west, in the cold light of dawn, a fast sloop off Lingeh was shadowing two dhows, making a bee-line for that port from the south-east. What was aboard these two dhows was unknown to the commander of the sloop: but he interposed his ship between Lingeh and the dhows on principle, until he had an opportunity of ascertaining. The dhows veered away in a suggestive manner more to the north. They now seemed bent on gaining the southern entrance to the

Clarence Straits, which separate Qishm Island from the main-land. Once within those narrow intricate channels, they could confidently count on eluding their pursuer.

Instead of attempting to head them off from these sheltering waters, however, the sloop confined herself, to the intense relief of the *nakhudas*, to shepherding the fugitives whither she herself would soon be unable to follow them, without grave risk of going ashore. The harbour of safety so near at hand, the hopes of the *nakhudas* rose high; and their comments on the tactics of their pursuer were not over complimentary to the intelligence of the naval commander. They were still less so when the skippers gaily steered their crafts into the Straits. For then did the rascals indulge in openly defiant gestures towards their hated foe as their trusty dhows disappeared into this sanctuary. The road was now clear to Khamir, since Lingeh had been denied them.

Yet, strangely enough, similar tactics were being pursued by the other fast sloop off Larak Island, some thirty-five miles to the north-east of Hanjam. She, too, had fallen in at daylight with a couple of dhows heading in the direction of Bandar Abbas, and gave chase. The dhows tried to separate, one continuing on her course so as to leave Larak to starboard, whilst the other attempted to break away to the east of the island. Like a sheep-dog, dispatched to round up straying members of a flock, the sloop followed hot-foot to head off the wayward craft; and gradually she forced her to change course into the wake of her companion. Thus the chase was steadily maintained, the sloop contenting herself in shepherding the fugitives past the north-east end of Qishm Island, and then driving them west along its northern shore towards the upper exit of the Clarence Straits, and their original objective, Khamir.

This inexplicable procedure mystified the anxious *nakhudas* much. In bearing each other company, they relied upon one or the other getting away clear should they, by evil chance, be pursued during their dash for the Persian coast after detection in mid-ocean. They had now, unhappily, fallen in with a second cruiser; but she made no effort to overtake them, and subject one to examination—thus affording an opportunity for the other to escape. The whole affair was puzzling, for in a little while, if the cruiser persisted in such action, they would gain safety in the Straits.

Sure enough, they, too, presently vanished within the winding channels of that tricky coast-line; and their skippers' glee was

great at the prospect of landing their cargoes shortly at Khamir. They would have been less confident had they witnessed the smile of success on the face of the commander of the sloop, standing off the entrance to the Straits, as he cheerfully remarked to his Number One, 'Well, that settles those two.'

Soon there was borne on the morning breeze the sound of the sharp bark of 3-pounders, and the rat-tat-tat of machine guns, issuing from the recesses of the Straits. The turmoil announced that the mosquito fleet of powerful armed tugs, concealed therein, was engaged with the dhows in the narrow channels where there was little room for manœuvre, and no chance of escape from this lair.

Earlier in the morning, a similar engagement had taken place more than twenty miles away, near the southern entrance to the Straits. There three other tugs had overwhelmed the two dhows that sought safety in those waters, and compelled one to disgorge 700 rifles, 250 boxes of ammunition, and ten Afghans. The other dhow, intended to act as a decoy, carried no arms; but she, too, was sunk.

The fresh haul farther north was almost identical. Thus, the morning's work resulted in the destruction of five dhows, and the capture of 2000 rifles and some 700 boxes of ammunition. Incidentally, five-and-twenty sorry-looking Afghans, several badly wounded, were provided with accommodation in a Government prison at Karachi later, instead of reaping a rich harvest in the fair fields of Kabul and Herat.

The 'cows' had been driven home to their stalls after grazing, milked dry, and granted leisure for chewing the cud of reflection.

HERITAGE.

My mother's great-grandmother
 A lass from Devon came ;
 Her little body is dust so long
 I've nigh forgotten her name.

Her wistful legend only
 Has stood the wrack of years,
 How always at the summer's flood
 Her laughter broke to tears ;

She'd blunder with her baking,
 Her stitches ran uneven ;
 She'd droop above her churn and sigh,
 ' Ah me, it's June in Devon ! '

It made a family byword
 Long after she was dead ;
 ' As fine as June in Devonshire,'
 Her children's children said.

Across the world I journeyed
 One year, as summer came,
 And stumbled on her little heart
 Who had forgotten her name,

And found beyond refuting
 What made that crooked seam,
 What burned the biscuits in their prime,
 And spoiled the mellow cream.

O little great-grandmother,
 The dream that bound your brow
 Has touched my own unwitting eyes—
 It's June in Devon now !

NANCY BYRD TURNER.

THE LIONS OF THE MASAI RESERVE.

BY 'ASKAR.'

I.

WHEN the British Government decided to connect Uganda with the Indian Ocean by rail, it soon became apparent that the proposed line would have to pass through the country of the warlike Masai, a powerful nomad tribe whose very name was dreaded far and wide. At that time it happened that the chief or Laibon, as he was called, of this well-organised people was a very wise old man. In a dream it had been revealed to him that one day the white men would appear, and that, unless some amicable arrangement was arrived at, the utter defeat of the tribe was inevitable. In due course an agreement was signed which guaranteed to the Masai adequate grazing lands for their not inconsiderable flocks and herds, in return for which the Masai undertook, not only not to interfere with the construction of the line, but to restrain the activities of other equally predatory but less enlightened tribes. This arrangement was eminently satisfactory to both contracting parties; the line was built, and the Masai established in some of the finest pasture in the Protectorate. The 'Moran' or young warriors, however, soon found life under the new conditions exceedingly tame. According to the custom of ages they were trained to arms, firstly for the protection of the tribe and secondly for the raiding of cattle with which to buy themselves wives. In spite of the loyal efforts of the chiefs and older men to restrain their ardour, occasionally a party of young bucks would break out, returning with blooded spears and overdriven cattle for which they were unable to account. At one period this practice had become so prevalent that the political Commissioner decided that a salutary lesson must be administered, and applied for a company of King's African Rifles to be placed at his disposal. It was not that he expected any organised resistance, but he considered it advisable to show the younger generation that if necessary he could enforce his demands.

II.

It was my good fortune to belong to the company detailed to proceed to the Masai Reserve and await his instructions. Captain Z., who was in command, knew the country and advised me not to

leave behind my sporting rifles, as we should be sure to come across plenty of game. We were certainly not to be disappointed : as we moved leisurely through the Reserve, game of every kind met our gaze ; herds of zebra, wildebeest, and antelope seemed to crowd the horizon, while occasionally giraffe and ostriches were seen in the distance, leaving the impression that the contents of several Noah's Arks had been set out on the vast undulating plain, which was only broken by occasional kopjes and patches of bush. Indeed it was a sportsman's paradise, but we had first to get to the Commissioner's camp and hear what he required of us. Fervently did we hope that our presence would be required sufficiently long to allow of a little hunting on our own account. As we passed the large herds of Masai cattle, the armed herdsmen greeted us politely, though without the slightest sign of embarrassment, rather as one sportsman salutes another. They were men of splendid physique, their graceful poses reminiscent of the statues of the ancient Greek athletes. And indeed athletes they are. A young Masai thinks nothing of running down an unwounded buck ; and even a youth will unhesitatingly drive off with his spear a leopard that approaches too near the flocks he is guarding. Naked, except for a cloth around the shoulders, the body is daubed all over with a reddish-brown pigment, and the hair, grown long and plaited in a queue, is smeared the same colour. They carry a long spear, varying in shape according to the status of the bearer, elder, warrior, or mere boy, the point of which is sometimes protected by a ball of black ostrich feathers. Their equipment is completed by a short, stout sword, and occasionally a heavy shield of buffalo hide painted in quarterings with devices showing the bearer's clan and section. On ceremonial occasions, they produce wonderful head-dresses of lions' manes and ostrich plumes, giving the wearer a most terrifying appearance. They do not build villages, as they follow the grazing, but use collapsible huts made of matting and hides which are carried on donkeys and put together by the women when required, in the form of a square, the centre of which is used as a protection for the cattle at night. The women, who are not allowed to beautify themselves as do their lords and masters, do all the work, for no Masai male will perform any duty beyond that of the protection of the tribe and the herding of the cattle. So great is their love of cattle that a Masai has been known to carry for days a calf born on the march belonging to a herd which is being driven away as a fine or being returned to its rightful owners.

That night we camped near a water-hole, which had been specially prepared by the Government for the watering of large numbers of cattle, for the benefit of the Masai. This had become necessary, as otherwise the tribe would have been unable to maintain their ever-increasing herds in the Reserve, extensive though it was. The work had been carried out by labourers of the Kikuyu, an agricultural tribe, at one time more or less under the domination of the Masai and frequently used by them as domestic slaves. I took the trouble to question one or two of them who had still remained with the Masai, though of course now free to return to their own country if they wished. They told me that they were quite happy as they were and preferred to remain with the Masai, who were kind and considerate and paid them well.

III.

Next morning Z. and I pushed ahead of the column to the Commissioner's camp. We found him surrounded by Masai headmen, whom he had called together to talk over the situation. After a pleasant lunch, we were relieved to hear that, as he expected that the negotiations would be prolonged, he proposed to send us on to an excellent camping ground, some ten miles distant, where there was sufficient water for our needs, and near a kopje from which we could easily establish helio communication with the nearest telegraph station. He added casually that he believed that the lions there had been playing havoc amongst the Masai cattle. Highly elated, Z. departed with a Masai guide to reconnoitre the camp, while I returned to divert the column to the altered destination. That night we sat long over our camp-fire discussing the habits and customs of lions and how best to circumvent them. Z., though he had already bagged two, still had a healthy respect for them. Amongst other points we decided, I remember that, if by any chance a lion did get hold of one of us, the other should not hesitate to fire for fear of hitting the wounded man. That night my dreams were disturbed by charging lions, on whom my well-directed shots seemed to have not the slightest effect.

Next morning Z. fixed up the helio station, while I supervised the construction of a semi-permanent camp. We first erected a thick thorn fence round the encampment, improved the water-hole, and commenced the construction of a grass hut to serve as a mess-house; also the carriers were put on to collect plenty of firewood

for the large fires which were necessary to keep off prowling beasts at night. After lunch we started out to reconnoitre the country; the Masai were eager to assist us, as their losses had been very heavy of late, especially from lionesses teaching their cubs to kill. They used to jump into the manyattas (enclosures in which the cattle are placed for protection at night) and maim five or six beasts before they could be driven off. Z. was of opinion that the surest way of securing lions was to 'stalk a kill at dawn.' There is no doubt that this is an excellent method if you have plenty of time and men at your disposal. Having found a suitable spot, we set about baiting the trap. The first thing to do is to choose a spot within a few yards of some cover, and if possible near water, as a lion is likely to remain till dawn to drink, and even return afterwards to the kill. Attention should also be paid to the prevailing wind, care being taken to approach up wind. Then shoot a zebra or antelope, to which lions are partial, and peg it down securely so that the lions are unable to drag it away. The kill must then be covered with thorn bushes to protect it from the birds of prey that would otherwise clean up the carcass. Just before sundown it is advisable to stalk the kill just as though a lion was expected to be found on it; in this way you familiarise yourself with the approach, and can remove any obstacles which you may come across, such as twigs or leaves which might crackle under your feet and give you away. Having satisfied yourself that all is well, you withdraw the thorns from the kill; everything is now ready, and all you have to do is to pray that lions or at least a lion will be still on the kill when you arrive at the first streak of dawn. It did not take us long to bring down a zebra and complete the arrangements already described.

Shortly before sundown we returned to the kill, carefully marking any objects which might assist us in our approach in the darkness, as we proposed to be ready to shoot at dawn. It was decided that I should practise the approach, while Z. remained a hundred yards or so behind. Creeping stealthily forward, stopping occasionally to listen, my double four-fifty ready for instant action, and closely followed by my orderly, Abdul Gadir, I gradually approached the bushes overlooking the kill. Nothing had been disturbed, and I was just pulling away the thorns when I was surprised by the appearance of the breathless Z.; he told me that as soon as I had left him a big lioness, who must have been watching near by, not quite satisfied that all was well, had started to stalk me. He had been unable to fire, for fear of hitting me, and as he hurried after

her she suddenly darted into a patch of bush just ahead of him. It was now near sunset, so we hastened back to camp : for darkness closes down suddenly on the equator, and it is not wise to be caught out on the open plain at night. We were, however, cheered to know that at least one lion had been already attracted by our ground bait.

Just before dawn we set out, and, halting near the kill a few moments for the first streaks of light to enable us to see our sights, crept forward. The absolute silence was ominous, for as a rule a lion on a kill growls and purrs audibly. And indeed we were to be disappointed ; the lioness had evidently smelt a rat and, thinking discretion the better part of valour, kept away. Hoping for better luck next time, we replaced the thorn bushes on the kill and returned to camp for breakfast. As Z. had some correspondence to attend to, I sallied forth to get some meat for the pot, and took with me a .216 Canadian Ross rifle I had recently bought from a game ranger. It was a beautiful little weapon, with a wonderfully flat trajectory, and in consequence marvellously accurate. It was what is called a magnum, that is, the cartridge is larger in circumference than the bullet, thus giving a greater velocity ; it had also what is called a straight push-bolt action, the bolt being held in position by the automatic action of an interrupted screw, instead of turning over as is usual, facilitating extremely rapid fire. I had not to go far to find game—indeed it was rather a case of *embarras des richesses*. So, selecting a Thompson's gazelle, I had a shot at about two hundred yards, but for some unaccountable reason missed several times ; however, as the animal remained undisturbed, without turning my head I called to my orderly for more ammunition. In his excitement he handed me a .303 cartridge, which I jammed into the breech and fired. The result was of course an explosion, as, though the cartridge would just go into the chamber, the bullet could not enter the barrel. Indeed, it says a good deal for the construction of the Ross rifle that the bolt did not blow straight back into my face, in which case this tale would never have been told. As it was, I was left badly shaken and my right eye and right hand burnt.

On return to camp I found that Z. had received orders to find an escort for a hundred cows, part of the fine inflicted on the Masai, and, as my hand would incapacitate me from tackling dangerous game for a few days, he suggested that I should take charge of the party. Accordingly at dawn the next day we parted, I with the cows and escort of a dozen or so Askaris, and Z. to the kill. Within a few minutes of starting we were startled by two shots in rapid succession,

evidently from a heavy rifle, and then several others at intervals. Without doubt Z. had not drawn blank this time. Two of the Masai guides accompanying me asked permission to run back and bring us the news, as they regarded the lions of the neighbourhood as personal enemies. They soon returned; Z. had 'struck it rich,' —a fine lioness, probably our friend of the first day, and a young lion; he had got them with a right and left, the later shots being only fired to 'mak' siccar' as the Scots say, for it is unwise to leave anything to chance with lions; they have been known to sham dead.

All that day we moved through a beautiful valley black with Masai cattle, but literally alive with flies, the curse of a cattle country. The men's backs were so covered as to be quite unrecognisable; my switch, a wildebeest's tail, was never still. We camped that night at the head of the valley, and found a veterinary surgeon who had been sent to investigate one of the mysterious cattle diseases which so frequently decimate and sometimes wipe out whole herds in Africa. He told me that he had heard that a band of young Masai were on the war-path and had sworn to blood their spears. Apparently led by a violent young 'Moran,' who was already wanted for murder, they had given out that 'they were tired of being treated as children, and that anyhow it was better to fall in battle than to continue "existing" under such conditions. Consulting my guides, however, I gathered that there was not the least likelihood of any attack on my party or attempt to lift the cattle: in their opinion it was merely talk, and would end in feasting and dancing. Nevertheless, I picketed my men round the cattle and determined to push on at all possible speed, and hand the cattle over to the Commissioner at the edge of the Reserve as soon as possible. The next day we pressed forward without incident. Emerging from the valley, we passed into less open country, with patches of dense bush and only indifferent grazing for the herd, but towards sunset reached the river which bordered the Reserve and where the cattle were to be handed over. Tired after the long day's trek, we had all our work cut out to make a 'boma' of thorn bushes for the protection of the cattle for the night, and were glad to turn in after the evening meal. We were not, however, to be undisturbed. About 10 P.M. a thunder of hoofs brought me out of my tent, rifle in hand; calling my orderlies, I asked them what they thought it could be. They replied that it must be a herd of zebra in terrified flight before hunting lions. And indeed it was. We could now hear the deep grunts of the lioness who was driving the

maddened beasts towards her lord, who lay in wait ready to make his spring as one passed sufficiently close to him. It was a most unpleasant experience, as the frenzied herd might easily have galloped right over us. We had little more rest that night, as the terror-stricken beasts kept rushing backwards and forwards. We could do nothing but put more wood on the fires and double the sentries. At dawn I sallied forth in the hope of getting a shot at the disturber of my night's rest, as I could still hear the occasional grunt of a hunting lion. Never was anything more elusive than that grunt: sometimes it seemed so near that I expected to see him behind the next bush in front of me, and then it was away behind in the distance. An hour or so after dawn, looking upwards, my orderly spotted several birds of prey (vultures) circling round and making tentative swoops at something on the ground, and, thinking that at last we had located the quarry on his kill, we crept stealthily forward, only to see a filthy hyena tearing at the remains of a half-devoured zebra. Thwarted again, I returned despondently to camp, thinking over the stories I had heard of how many men had spent years in Africa after lion, and some of those even who had come out for the very purpose of shooting them, had returned without ever even having seen one. After a rest and a meal I spent the rest of the day arranging to hand over the cattle to a veterinary officer for inoculation and despatch to headquarters.

That evening, as I was writing up my journal before dinner, I was delighted and surprised to see C., a well-known professional hunter, walk into the camp. He was one of the most interesting men in the country, as, besides being a most experienced big-game hunter, he was a trained naturalist and had great knowledge of the African native. He was at that time taking a party of Germans on an extended shooting trip, and was glad of the opportunity to escape from their company and spend the evening with me. When I asked if he had seen anything of Z., he told me that he had spent the night preceding with him and had one of the most extraordinary experiences in even his varied career. Apparently late in the afternoon C.'s safari had arrived and outspanned near Z.'s camp. C.'s was a large party, consisting of a young German blessed with more money than brains, his wife and mother, with a suite of several white attendants and the usual crowd of camp followers and boys; two ox-waggons driven by Boers were required to carry their numerous tents and portmanteaux. They were quite inexperienced, and apparently took more interest in beetles and butterflies than big

game: in fact, so apprehensive was C. that they would get the worst of any encounter with dangerous game, that he had given strict orders that on no account were they to be told if a lion or a rhino was spotted. As soon as orders for pitching camp had been issued, C. had strolled across to Z.'s camp to have a yarn and to ask for news of game, and had accepted Z.'s invitation to dinner. As they were smoking over the camp-fire, they heard several lions roaring angrily and apparently approaching the camp. C. realised at once that they were not hunting for meat, but seeking vengeance, and meant actually to attack the camp. They were evidently attracted by the skins of the lioness and the young lion shot by Z. that morning, which were pegged out near the camp-fire just in front of the hut. C. thought that he had better return at once to his party, as they were very nervous and might start shooting indiscriminately; one of the Boers, who had been badly mauled some years ago, was thoroughly 'panicked,' and had already opened fire. Z., who was a very cool hand, stood by with his orderlies and waited till he could see the eyes of the approaching lions, who appeared to be five or six in number, before firing. They came on snarling and growling savagely almost up to the fire, and only retired before a regular fusillade. As they were still hanging about, Z. called up half a dozen or so of the Askaris, now thoroughly aroused and standing to. No less than three times did the infuriated beasts attack the camp, and it was a marvel to Z. how they all escaped the regular hail of bullets poured into the darkness at close range. Meanwhile C. had a very difficult time with his Germans, who all turned out armed to the teeth, while the mother of the leader of the party hung around his neck, waving a jewelled revolver dangerously near his ear. It was all C. could do to prevent them from loosing off in all directions; as it was several bullets did hit the waggons, but fortunately there were no casualties. At dawn Z. had again sallied forth and found a fine black-maned lion on the kill, whom he despatched with a single shot through the heart. Talking it over, C. was of opinion that this was the gentleman who had led the attacking party of the night before, and that he had sought to avenge the death of his 'lady fair' whose skin lay pegged out in Z.'s camp. It was, I believe, almost unique for lions to attack two large camps protected by several fires and to face so persistently such heavy firing. C. also confirmed my view that there was nothing to be feared from the Massai, but I determined to rejoin Z. at once and pray to be allowed to devote myself to hunting till I had secured at least one lion.

IV.

On my return Z. at once gave me *carte blanche*, but added that he thought that the old kill was played out, and advised me to bait another trap. Accompanied by my faithful orderly Abdul Gadir, I soon found what seemed to us an ideal spot within half a mile of camp. It was a little piece of open ground near a small spring at the edge of a patch of bush. There was a clump of trees within seven yards which could easily be approached unseen, and at the same time provided excellent cover and view. We killed a zebra and what is locally known as a kongoni, a large antelope of the hartebeest variety, pegged both securely down and covered them as usual with thorn bushes. That evening we carefully rehearsed the stalk, and started to return to camp feeling thoroughly satisfied that we had done all that was humanly possible. Passing the head of a little valley, I noticed some pig scurrying away as if the devil were after them, and then several antelopes moving uneasily in the same direction. What puzzled me was that they appeared to be quite oblivious of our presence, though we were striding along in the open without any attempt at concealment. As we were watching, a beautiful impala came in sight and stopped, hesitating as though not knowing which way to turn. Then appeared the cause of all the trouble—a black and white dog not much larger than a collie and with a similar bushy tail, followed by another, evidently part of a pack of hunting dogs which were driving all the game before them. Abdul Gadir seemed quite perturbed and immediately closed up ready for action; according to him these wild dogs will turn for nothing, and will drive a lion from his kill, and if in sufficient numbers will even attack men. I fired at the impala and as he fell the two dogs leaped forward and began to tear at the prostrate body. I fired again and hit one of the dogs in the shoulder. The others, some five or six, who had now come up, took little notice, merely glancing in our direction; but the remainder of the pack, without seeming to be in the least frightened, separated into two parties and started to work round our flanks. What impressed me most was the quiet, persistent way in which they worked; but much as I should have liked to watch them longer, as darkness was nearly upon us I yielded to the repeated warnings of Abdul Gadir and, leaving them to their repast, turned campwards.

Next morning, as we crawled out of camp in that intense darkness which precedes dawn, I felt very cold and almost regretted the comfortable blankets I had just left. There was no moon,

though the stars seemed very near. But suddenly everything was blotted out. What could be that black mass in front of me. Surely not a bush. No, it was moving—now faster. Leaping aside, I realised that I had stumbled right into a rhino sauntering down to his morning drink. He turned after me sharply ; there was nothing for it, so I fired rapidly, one barrel after the other, into the great bulky body. By the light of the flash I could see his wicked little pig eyes within a couple of feet of mine, as with a great snort he whipped around and started off like a steam engine into the darkness. Although it was unlikely that we would find anything on our kill now, I pushed ahead to see if anything had been there during the night, and, sure enough, at least two lions had investigated the kill and started to devour it, but, disturbed by the shots, had cleared off. Pulling over the thorns again, I started in pursuit of the wounded rhino but, though we searched far and wide, no trace of him could we find. He had probably covered several miles before seeking cover.

Sunset found us again approaching the kill. Pushing forward through the undergrowth, I found myself staring straight into the eyes of a full-grown lioness ; she was sitting up on her hindquarters, smacking her lips, for all the world like a domestic cat anticipating a bowl of cream. The great yellow eyes had an extraordinarily fascinating effect on me ; they seemed the incarnation of remorseless ferocity and pitiless cruelty, and it was only with difficulty that I withdrew my gaze ; she, on the other hand, seemed quite unconscious of my presence, although I felt as if she must see my very thoughts.

Creeping stealthily away, after a whispered consultation with Abdul Gadir I decided to leave matters as they were till the morning : first, because it was a lioness and I wanted a lion ; secondly, because it is difficult to skin a beast at night, and the skinning should be done at once, or the body stiffens and the skin is probably spoiled ; and thirdly, because the lioness, perhaps accompanied by others, would probably be there in the morning, as she had not yet commenced to feed. Needless to say, I did not return to pull away the thorns. Next morning, in our eagerness, we were a little in advance of time, so had to wait some hundred yards or so from the kill for light enough to see our sights. What hours those few minutes seemed ! There were lions there all right ; we could hear them growling and snarling over the kill. To add to the tension, the chattering of some monkeys in the trees near by threatened to give us away. How I inwardly cursed the whole Simian race !

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Unable to wait any longer, anxiously trying to distinguish my foresight, I crept slowly forward. It was still dark, and the shadow of the overhanging trees did not improve matters ; however, there was a lion, still unperturbed, tearing great strips of flesh from the body of the zebra. I just caught a glimpse of the lioness as she slipped into the undergrowth, obviously calling on her mate to follow, but fortunately he was too greedy to heed her warning of impending danger.

In a way I was not sorry to see the lioness go, as, after all, it was the lion that I wanted. If she had remained and I fired at him, I knew that in all probability she would immediately charge the flash, while, on the other hand, if I fired first at her, he would probably slink off into the bush. I had not yet bagged a lion, and did not want to take any chances.

He was in a difficult position with his head away from me, but I dared not delay, so fired at once, hoping to disable him with a raking shot. As the heavy bullet struck him just above the tail, he turned on his side, snarling savagely. I let him have the other barrel, aiming for the heart. Abdul Gadir fired as he struggled to his feet, while I reloaded quickly, expecting the lioness to charge every moment. He was now very groggy, but he tried to get at us, and a last shot through the head was necessary to finish him. We waited a few moments and then advanced cautiously, still on the look-out for the lioness. She had, however, cleared off, so we proceeded to examine the fallen lion. He was a fine beast, not quite full grown but in excellent condition though horribly, distended after his orgy—measuring 12 feet from tip to tail. Abdul Gadir was highly elated ; he was a Galla, a hunting race who consider the slaying of a lion the most glorious of exploits. We had difficulty in restraining the Masai from plunging their spears into the body, as is their custom, but they contented themselves with unprintable imprecations and gestures of contempt. The odour from the kill was so nauseous that I could hardly approach, and soon decided to return to camp, leaving the orderlies to perform the unpleasant obsequies and escort the carcass back.

On its arrival Z. took a snapshot of myself and Abdul Gadir standing in the characteristic attitude so often seen in the society papers, but frequently taken in studios far from the scene of the actual shooting. The morning was devoted to skinning and the important rites connected therewith. Great care has to be taken that no stray native is allowed to approach, as they are not above

purloining a whisker or a claw, which they believe have remarkable healing qualities. One of the perquisites of the gun-bearers is the fat, and it is quite surprising how much is found on a lion in good condition. They use it to anoint their bodies, and implicitly believe that it imbues them with the courage and ferocity of a lion.

V.

Next day the Commissioner came out to lunch, and, having duly admired the skins, informed Z. that, as the Masai had now made amends and given him guarantees for future good behaviour, he would not require our presence any longer. He added that he honestly believed that they were more impressed by our war on the lions than by the display of force, and that instead of requests for the removal of the company he had received a petition that we might be allowed to stay and rid the district of them altogether. Thus we all parted on the very best of terms, and were escorted next day to the edge of the Reserve by a small impi of Masai warriors chanting in unison the song of the 'hunters who knew not fear.'

BY CANDLELIGHT.

BY ALICE LOWTHER.

I.

THE woman drew farther back into the shadow ; she had difficulty in controlling her voice.

' It must have been about 6 o'clock when it happened. Yesterday was one of her grey days : she'd been queer and silent, with fits of bitter crying. I settled her early—at 9 o'clock—but she could not sleep. She was bothered about Martin. Then, at last, she died.'

The doctor straightened himself. He avoided the woman's gaze.

' When did you notice the—er—change ? '

' An hour ago, perhaps more. Her breathing was strange. The men were coming off shift. I asked one of them to call at the Surgery.'

The doctor made no reply. He was staring down at the bed, and frowning. The woman eyed him intently. She wondered how much he knew, how much he guessed. Suppose he taxed her, should she—dare she—confess the truth ? . . .

Suddenly the doctor bent again over the bed. The woman gave a little gasp, and closed her eyes. It was come then—the moment she dreaded. She leant against the wall with shaking limbs. She had no need to watch what he was doing : she knew. And fear turned her sick.

His voice roused her.

' I thought you'd stopped that months ago. You told me so.'

She looked up at him. He towered above her, tall and accusatory.

' I did stop,' she whispered.

' Do you take me for a fool ? ' he snapped. ' I'm not blind. I've seen the marks.'

' It's true what I said. I did stop. Till last night.'

' Well ? Last night ? ' he prompted.

She looked at him in miserable silence. Slowly the colour drained from the man's face, leaving it strained and bleak : it was his turn now to be afraid. He began to speak, rapidly, loudly.

' You mean last night she was worse ? She had pain ? You gave her a big dose ? '

The woman's mouth twisted. She sensed his change of attitude ; but though the urgency of his appeal released within her a searing torrent of tears, she spoke steadily, even sternly.

' She was no worse than usual ; she complained of no pain. I gave her all that I had.'

' All ! What do you mean ? '

From the front of her bodice she drew an empty phial.

' It was half full,' she said.

The hand he held out was trembling. He raised the tube to the light.

' My God ! ' he muttered ; and again, ' My God ! '

The man's mind was a chaos whence emerged one thought, and that flame-white : this was the woman he had meant, eventually, to wed ; the woman to whom, even now, had he been more pressing or she less occupied, he might have stood affianced. Indeed, according to some standards, he was morally bound to her already.

' What are you going to do ? ' she asked at last.

' Do ? ' he echoed blankly. Then, with the quick squaring of the shoulders she knew so well, he set himself to grapple with the situation. ' There's nothing to be done,' he said briskly. ' It's a pity, of course. But these things happen, and oftener than you'd think. Don't worry about it. Leave it to me ; I'll make all right. I'll draw up the certificate at once.'

' Ah, no,' she cried. ' Don't talk like that. Indeed, I can't bear it—the pretence ! With others it's different ; but between you and me——'

' Between you and me.' The phrase stung him to brutality.

' Hush ! ' he commanded. ' You don't know what you are saying. Suppose someone heard you. Be quiet, I say ! '

She tottered toward him, weakly crying and wringing her hands.

' I'll be quiet—I promise. Only let me explain—nobody can hear. I must tell someone—I must. And you know. Besides, you knew her : you'll understand.'

He caught her roughly by the wrists.

' Be still. I want no explanation—you hear ?—none. I do understand, I understand perfectly. You made a mistake, injected too much morphia—or you think you did. Be silent, I say. I'll make it right : trust me. Your mother died of heart failure.'

I've been expecting it for days. Hush, now, hush. Better give me the syringe while we're about it. That's better. There now. All you've to do is to forget—put the whole matter behind you ; you are too sensible a woman to be morbid. Get to bed : you'll feel a different person after a sleep. You are overwrought, you know ; and no wonder ! It's been a heavy time for you. Anyone would break down. What you want is sleep. Oh yes, you can. I'll send a draught round with the certificate.'

Her face, blanched and despairing, with a look in the eyes as of frozen tears, unnerved him ; but he schooled his voice to professional nonchalance.

'Come, lie down at once. Let me see you resting before I go.'

He led her across the room to the truckle bed whereon for the last nine years she had passed her nights. Mechanically, she yielded to him ; resistance would have entailed courage and hope : he had robbed her of both.

'That's better,' he declared, drawing the worn quilt up to her chin. 'Now try to get a little sleep. Shall I send anybody in ? '

'No, I'll manage. I promised mother.' She looked up at him, pleading, desperate. 'If only you'd let me tell you,' she whispered.

'No, no. There's nothing to tell,' he said, forcing a smile to his lips.

He left her then, but the thought of her lying there, alone in the house with the woman she had drugged to death, pursued him homeward. He was mortified, shame-stricken by the part he had played.

'Yet what could I do ? ' he groaned. 'She's not fit to be with folk.'

Later in the day, when he learnt that the neighbours' offers of help were being met by the woman with steady refusals, he was frankly glad. Perhaps, after all, nothing would leak out. If only the culprit were silent, no one could guess the truth. Everyone, himself included, had thought her devoted to her mother. Poor girl ! A pity he couldn't go round to see her. Wiser not ! He must avoid her confidences. It would never do, at this stage, to put ideas into her head, to let her imagine she could depend upon him. Still, it was a pity ! . . . He wished he hadn't examined the dead woman's arm. Perhaps if he hadn't—— But no ! It would have made no difference. A woman like that must have blurted out the truth ; if not then, later. Trust her ! Why, with a lie framed for her, she had refused to utter it. Pshaw !

And he might have married her. What an escape! A queer business though. He wondered how she had come to do the thing. She was fond enough of her mother: that he could swear. A tiresome, cantankerous old woman, the mother, too! Hardly worth the keeping alive. Still, folk couldn't be allowed to kill off their relatives merely because they found them tiresome. Not that there mightn't be something to be said for the custom, but—well, it wasn't done! Quite right too, come to think of it. Take himself, for example. He might be ill, and he didn't suppose he'd make a specially even-tempered patient. Would she have tried to finish him off? Ugh! A beastly notion: kind of brought it home to a man, that! He must certainly keep out of the woman's way for a time. She was dangerous, positively a menace to society! Marry her, of course, he couldn't. That was out of the question. But it was an awkward situation for a man—deuced awkward!

II.

They met next in the churchyard.

She had sent round a message asking him to attend the funeral, and, since the dead woman had been his patient for several years, he felt he could hardly refuse the daughter's request.

At the graveside the villagers made way for him, urging him with officious good-nature to the woman's side. The implication of their attitude irked him more sorely for his compulsory acquiescence in it; and, when the ceremony was over and the people began to disperse, he came near to hating the cause of his embarrassment.

She was standing with bowed head, her work-worn hands clasped before her. So wholly unconscious of her surroundings she seemed that the doctor was considering the possibility of stealing quietly away when she raised her head.

'I am glad you are come,' she said, looking him full in the face. 'I wanted to say good-bye. I am going away.' Her voice took an edge of irony. 'Yes,' she repeated, 'I am going away. And I shall not return.'

'Indeed?' he stammered. 'This is news to me.'

'But you are glad?'

'Well, since you will have it, yes. You need a change—of scene as well as of air. If I am allowed to advise, take a long rest—by the sea, if possible.'

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She waited till he had finished.

'Will you let me explain—now ?'

'My dear girl, there's nothing to explain. How often must I tell you ? It's unhealthy, you know, this—er—morbid insistence on—'

'As you will,' she said wearily. 'I must write, then. Oh, don't be alarmed : it shall only be the once. I quite understand the position ; you have made it perfectly clear. You are safe from me.' She looked from the disconcerted man to the open grave. 'More lies there than Mother,' she said in a voice indescribably dreary.

III.

Nearly a month elapsed before the threatened letter arrived ; but though in the interval the doctor had somewhat recovered his nerve and his sense of proportion, his self-esteem was still so far damaged as to make him averse to reviewing the situation. He was prepared to admit the woman's long heroism, her unswerving devotion to what must have been at times a most irksome duty ; still——! 'It's unfortunate,' he commented to a friend, *d propos de* nothing in particular, 'that years of toil and self-denial can be negatived by a moment's impulse, especially when the said impulse springs from pity as much as from self-interest. Seems unfair, doesn't it ? But it's Life. No use opposing life-forces ; they hit us all hard at times.'

Not until the evening after its arrival, when he had lit his pipe and settled himself before his study fire, did he open the letter, and then the fact that it bore no heading was sufficient to start off his recalcitrant thoughts at a tangent.

Conjecture was rife in the village as to the woman's whereabouts. On the eve of her departure she had entrusted her affairs to a neighbour, and since she had omitted to leave an address, the man now was inquiring as to where, when the outstanding debts were paid, he should transmit the balance due from her sales. The doctor had been approached on the subject several times. In the end, as the easiest way out of the difficulty, he had agreed to take over the money, and attend to its delivery. It was little enough anyhow, hardly worth her while to claim. And it was natural, under the circumstances, that she should wish to break all links with the past, and start afresh. Much the best thing too—for her. And, incidentally, for him. Lucky for them both she had the

means. Had she been penniless, his position would have been much more awkward. Come to think of it, she must be quite well off. The old lady had never lacked anything he could see: invalid-chairs, tables, beds—she had them all; whatever he had suggested for her comfort had been instantly procured. Certain curious anomalies he had noted about the *ménage*. The daughter herself had been often shabby, looking indeed the maid-of-all-work she virtually was. Obviously the old lady had absorbed more than her share of the family income . . . yes, considerably more. And the daughter was her heiress. He wondered whether that had been a factor in the case—unconscious of course. One could never be sure. Folk were so queer, motives so conflicting. Anyhow, she had benefited by the old lady's death: that, for him, was the main point.

Well, well, he supposed he might as well read the damned thing and get it over. Ugh, what a length it was! A pity women could never be prevailed upon to let well alone.

'You were alarmed at the thought of my writing to you,' he read. 'You need not have been. I expect nothing—want nothing from you now but a hearing. Were I a Catholic, I should go to a priest. Not being a Catholic, I come to you, but it must be clearly understood that in choosing you, I am not actuated by thought of the feeling you once entertained for me. All I remember to-day is that you knew us well, Mother and me; that for five years you were our doctor; also, that of the things I am about to write, you already know much, guess more.'

'You remember calling one day when Mother had been more than usually exacting? You were angry with her—and with me for yielding to her. I was chopping wood, and crying. I tried to make you understand. I told you how different she had been before her seizure, how active a housewife, how patient and tender a mother. That's the heart-breaking part of paralysis. Bad enough to see a gay, energetic creature struck before your eyes into a mass of pain-racked helplessness! It's infinitely worse to know that the jewel the casket contained has, in an instant of time, been marred and dulled beyond recognition or repair. It's as though God in a rage had smeared and blurred His work, thinking it perhaps *too* good—and then left His wreckage about like a petulant child.'

'You saw what the world saw: a querulous, exacting invalid, demanding constant care and attention, refusing to allow me out of her sight, grudging me even a moment's respite or relaxation.'

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Well, you saw rightly. Yet what you saw was not my mother. My mother, all that was virtually and essentially she, died before ever we met. What remained was a simulacrum, like, yet most pitifully unlike, the woman I loved. Alas ! my manner of coping with her latter-day moods was not calculated to mirror forth to you the image of sweetness and pity that lived in the background of my mind.

' If we could wipe out those last nine years, Mother and I ! If they could be as they were not ! I would not live them over again. I know myself too well to hope I should do better. Not that I gave open vent to my irritation and impatience. Mine was a more subtle, more covert hurt than that. At her worst, when she was most troublesome, I made it my boast to obey her uttermost whim. I ran her errands, answered her plaints, gave ear to her reproaches, but all with a kind of laboured patience—an obtrusive forbearance as it were—with what Martin once called my " See-how-good-I-am " air. Oh, I knew it was there. And I loathed myself for it. But it came when she was difficult. One seemed as inevitable as the other. The insult of it !—the dire injury ! From me, young and strong, to her, the poor broken mother who had suffered so much. How bitterly it must have hurt ! Nay, how bitterly it *did* hurt !

' There were times when over the complaining old face would surge a wave of remembrance, and she would break into most lamentable weeping. And all I could do then was to throw my arms about her and hold her tight—tight, in an agony of futile repentance. " I'm such a trouble—such a burden," she would stammer. " You don't want me." " Oh, but I do—I do," I would cry, meaning it every word. And then I must needs soothe and pet the poor soul, and dry the worn cheeks till the loose mouth smiled and was steady again. Usually it did not take long, her emotions were mercifully transient ; but after such scenes she was generally more trying than before. She would tell me how much better other people treated her than I ; how much lighter of foot they were, defter of movement, softer of touch.

' Worst of all were the nights.

' Often, after a specially miserable day, while I lay in bed, aching in every limb, sore both in mind and in body, I would hear suddenly through the darkness,— " Oh, God ! Father ! Take me home to you. Take me now, God, in mercy. I've lived too long. I'm not wanted here."

' To have made such praying possible !—oh, my poor little

Mother! . . . Have you ever felt as though your pain and remorse would choke you, realising even then that the fault you so wildly deplore you will commit again and again in the days yet to come? It didn't ease my shame one whit that in my mind dwelt the certainty that if I had not been in the room, had she known herself alone or imagined me asleep, she would not have uttered that piteous outcry. She was like a child toward the end, you know; only to be judged as such, and loved.

'When you have a human creature as utterly dependent upon you as Mother was upon me, it's a poor thing if you can't keep her happy and content when the pain is not on her. And I had sworn that I could—and would. And I had failed. Then by what right had I kept her alive? That's the question that fronted me in the chill greyness of the dawns.

'Once, early on, at the commencement of her illness, she had begged most piteously that I would "let her go" as she put it. "I shall never be well," she pleaded in that halt, stammering speech of hers. "Let me go—now. Don't keep me, child. Let me go while the memory I leave is bright and clean." I cried then—I did not understand. "You will be well—you shall," I urged. "No, no. I can't bear it—the helplessness, the gradual spoiling. You mustn't hold me. It's cruel. You wouldn't treat a dog so." "Nay, Mother," I told her then, "I will not hold you. Since you wish it, go you shall—for me." But it was more than mere acquiescence in her going she demanded. She soon made that clear. She wanted me to *help* her go. She wanted the morphia. Oh, the hunger in her eyes as she pleaded with me, agonised! It was heart-breaking; but hardly yet a temptation. Temptation came later, when the pain-bouts were on, and I was in sole charge. I tell you it was hard then to resist, knowing that just a little more than the prescribed dose and the racked frame would lie for ever still, the pain-cramped spirit rise released and glad.

'Yet I did resist. I did refuse.

'I told you about it—you remember? You had come to me in the garden where I was hoeing. Mother had had a bad night, and I was horribly, desperately tired.

'"It is hard to deny her," I said.

'"It must be—devilish hard," you said.

'You understood then, at all events.'

The doctor sprang to his feet with an oath. He remembered the incident well. It was in the spring, and he had been scolding

the woman for overwork. As she stood before him, timid yet determined of mien, he had felt for the first time the appeal of her personality. He found a subtle charm in the worn but clear-cut features, in the patient eyes so big with dreams and tears. Something within him had responded to her fading beauty, her vanished youth. He had been sorry for her, deuced sorry. Well, was there any harm in that, he demanded truculently of the empty room. And now, this—this preposterous implication! Surely the woman was out of her mind. Did she imagine there was no difference between appreciating a difficult situation and conniving at manslaughter? He wished he had her there before him: he would soon put her right. He was coldly, furiously angry. He ached to explain things—to abuse someone. His hard-won complacency was slipping from him like a sharp-ripped coat; and his need for someone to victimise, the urgent desire that was on him to shout, to bellow forth his wrongs, dwarfed utterly his sense of proportion.

Only after a long time, and then with much muttering and grumbling, did he return to the reading of the letter.

‘After all, only in detail is what I am writing new to you. You know what she suffered. You know—you cannot help but know—how, under the daily jars, we loved each other, Mother and I. And how wrapped up she was in Martin. Sometimes, I admit, I was jealous of Martin. His service, it seemed to me, was so light, so much more highly prized than mine. Easy for him to make his flying visits; to take her out in her chair; to continue bright and cheerful—for a couple of days. Most folk could last out so long. And she always showed her best side to him. She was so grateful for all he did, so touchingly grieved for any trouble she caused. At times he remonstrated with me for my “bitterness.” “She isn’t herself, old girl. If you’d just remember all she has to put up with,” etc.

‘Thus, Martin!

‘As if I didn’t remember! Could I ever really forget? For sure, there were days when memory lay dormant—dull, torpid days; I tell you I thanked God for those days. Aye, such torture, such acute agony did memory trail for me that I thanked God for His cabbage-days.

‘But I was telling you about Martin and Mother. After his visits she would lament his absence most grievously, comparing his conduct with mine. Forgetting the other duties I had: the

scrubbing, the washing, the cooking, she would twit me because he came more quickly to her call than I. She would praise his alacrity in taking her walks—Martin! Did she never guess, was she so completely cut off from her own past that she could not realise with what sickness of effort I forced myself and her cumbersome chair along the cobbled village streets?

‘Ah, well, I am not “out” to-night to gain your approval. I am only desirous that you should understand.

‘When Martin went to the front I was afraid. You had warned me that if anything happened to him, it would be the end of mother. I need not have feared. She sensed no danger. True, she missed his visits, but in a surprisingly short time she had adjusted her thoughts, shifting her longings and anticipations to the coming of his letters. She came to live for those letters. When they were late, I was hard pressed to explain their delay. Sometimes I would try to confuse her about the dates. Once even I invented a missive, but she was very sharp—or I was stupid: anyway, she detected the fraud. After that, she insisted always on reading his notes herself; her sight, you will remember, was excellent, right to the end. On his first leave I made Martin write several letters to leave behind so that on her bad days I might appear to have received one by post, and hand it over to her. They had to be written to me, you understand: Mother would never have forgiven me for opening an envelope addressed to her.

‘But I am dallying. Forgive me. I am foolish. My mind jibbs. I have a great reluctance—a great reluctance—. Have patience. I will get on.

‘You know what happened. Martin was “lucky”; he came through the War unscathed, and after six weeks in England, he caught pneumonia and died. We had no warning. Just a letter from a stranger, saying all was over. You were very good to us then—I can never thank you for all you did: you weighted the balance then for ever. And you said, “Your mother must never know.”

‘Well, she never did.

‘That was four months ago. Four months! . . .

‘Since the first week, there was never a day—save one, and that the last!—without its inquiry; never a day without, for me, its load of deceit. From the first stirrings in the morning—“Any word from Martin to-day?” till the last word at night—“I wonder if there’ll be a line from my boy in the morning?” . . . I am

not good at lying ; moreover, it has always seemed to me a cowardly thing to take advantage of a fellow-creature's ignorance and weakness. Yet I did it. Daily, hourly, I lied to her. I camouflaged his old letters ; I invented difficulties for him, joked at his adventures, gloried in his imaginary successes. If, for a moment, I hesitated in my task, she would cry, "Are you keeping something from me ? Is Martin ill ?" till I was fain to reassure her. Then we would talk of the past : of Martin, always Martin—of how he would be coming soon to see her, and how he would carry her about in his strong young arms. . . .—Oh, Martin, Martin, my brother ! Did you hear, I wonder ? And did you at last forgive ? Surely, surely my jealousy of you lies drowned and hidden !

'Oh, those nightmare days ! those nights spent sheer on Hell ! Often in the darkness, I have urged my dreadful, silent prayer that the sun might be blotted from out the heavens or the earth flung flaming through the abyss rather than that God's pitiless dawn should break again for her and me.

'Yes, yes, I will hasten. Your patience must long have been exhausted, but this is the last demand I shall make upon it—or you.

'For a week previous, Mother had been fretful even to harshness, but that last day she was strangely still and subdued. I asked her if she was well. "Too well," she made answer, and I said no more ; it seemed to me that every nerve in my body cried out against further strain. And all day she made no mention of Martin. Even when occasionally I spoke of him, she barely answered. There was an expression in her eyes I had never seen before : I can't describe it : a kind of awful fascination. She was very silent. Only, everywhere, her eyes followed me—her haunting, haunted eyes.

'Those eyes of hers !

'When night fell, I had thought to be free of them. Alas ! even in bed, in the darkness, I saw them. They entreated me, commanded me. I closed my eyelids, I buried my head in the blankets. All in vain. They bored into my very brain. At last, the moment came when I could bear no more. I got up. I crossed the room. I peered into her face.

'She was awake.

'The firelight had played tricks with her face. I saw it grotesque, strongly and redly ridged, with heavy shifting pools of shadow. And out of it blazed her eyes.

‘ Almost, seeing them, I screamed.

‘ Suddenly, as I knelt there, shuddering, staring, she gripped my arm and began talking in a queer, whispering voice.

‘ “ I’m so glad you’ve come. I’ve things to tell you. It’s been hard waiting for you. Rebecca’s tired of me ; she’s a good girl, she’s been patient, but I’ve wearied her out. I’ve wearied everyone out. Even Martin. I thought he’d be different, my little Martin, but he’s tired too. It’s weeks since he came. Weeks. He never comes. He’s tired of his old mother. Rebecca makes up tales. She thinks I don’t know, but I do. At first I believed her, but I don’t any longer. You’d think a visit wasn’t much to ask. It’s time I went—an old woman who’s outlived her children’s patience. My boy’s too tired even to write.”

‘ I’ve not given you her words : only their purport. But you see ? She had taken me for someone else—for Father maybe, come to fetch her Home. And she had thought—oh, don’t you realise ?—can’t you understand ? All those weeks that I had been feeding her with lies, spurred ever by the fear that she would doubt me, she had been believing me. Just quietly, piteously believing. I ask you, was ever success more tragic, more damnable ? Most utterly and completely had the poor soul been duped. In her mind now dwelt no shadow of doubt. Martin, her boy, was alive and well. Then—surely the natural conclusion, had we but realised it !—he no longer cared.

‘ Directly I understood, I knew what I must do. I had no hesitancy. Almost before the whispering voice was still, I had loosed her grip on my arm, and with her tears wet on my cheek, I went to the drawer where the morphia things lay. . . . If God had no pity, I had. She had prayed to her God for release. Well, I don’t believe in God—not now !—but maybe I am wrong. Maybe there is a God, needing human instruments. Maybe, he needed me, used me. Maybe. Who knows ?

‘ There, in the night, I knelt beside her with my pan of boiling water. It took a long time. I dissolved all the morphia I had ; I meant to make a clean job of it. There should be no more blundering. The pain and the torture for her must cease, right there and then.

‘ When all was ready, I plucked up her sleeve. She had half-dozed, but now she roused, and in the light of the candle I had lit our eyes met, hers steady and clear.

‘ “ What are you doing, my girl ? ”

“Martin is coming to-morrow, Mother,” I said. “And I want you to have a good night’s rest in readiness.”

“Oh, the fear in her eyes!—the terror!

“It’s a lie. You—you bad daughter! Is it that you want to finish me?” she screamed, battling feebly with her one sound arm.

“I would do it again. I would do it again. But oh, how I wish that in the end she had gone willingly!

“I was wrong? Perhaps. Anyhow I am no dauntless rebel against a meaningless convention, no flamboyant prophet of a faith other than our fathers held. Anything, God knows, but that! You see in me only a tired, defeated, broken thing. I have tried and I have failed. I have fought and I have lost. That is all. Maybe in my worst impatience I was nearer victory than when at the last with a still determination and a blank despair I ended the long struggle. I do not know, nor indeed do I greatly care. But this thing I do know, and that beyond shadow of doubt: right or wrong, I would do it again. Oh, but I am weary, weary, too weary even to think; too weary, perhaps, to repent.

‘Well?

‘I’ve told you how it happened as plainly as I could. That it did happen you knew before.

‘I wonder what you will do. Probably nothing. That’s easiest. You would hardly care to report me, I suppose? Frankly, I could wish you would. There’s no one left to suffer in my disgrace.

‘One thing more before I close. You spoke of my taking a long rest as if you thought it were possible. Perhaps then you do not know my circumstances? Nine years ago, when Mother had her first seizure and it became clear that I must resign my post and attend to her, Martin and I decided to put what money father had left—both ours and hers—into a life-annuity. By removing into a village, and practising rigorous economy in the inessentials, we contrived to manage on it, even under war conditions. But, of course, with mother’s death, it ceased.

‘I wanted you to know this.

‘I have succeeded in obtaining a post here, in a factory, where references are dispensed with. So I am all right.

‘REBECCA.’

When he had finished reading, the man at the fire sat very still.

He remained for a long time, staring before him, her letter lying loosely on his knee.

After a while, his eye fell on the envelope where it lay upon the floor, address uppermost. The postmark, surely, was curiously distinct. Even from where he sat he could almost read it. 'B,' or was it 'R'?—and later, a small 'd' or 't.'

He moved sharply, turning his head that he might not see the lettering.

Again his thoughts ran on. He was looking into the fire now, his forehead red and swollen.

Suddenly he bent sideways, and, seizing the envelope, thrust first it, then the letter, amongst the embers. He held them down with a poker.

'It's better so—better for her,' he muttered, shamefaced.

He watched them burn.

Not till some time later did a repressed memory break through the barrier of his unconscious: What of the money, *her* money, that he held in trust? Where now might he send it? Surely he seemed fated to rob this woman; first, of her expectations—now, of her lawful rights! It was damnable! Was ever man placed in so false, so abominable a position? . . .

On the mantelshelf a timepiece chimed the hour. Four o'clock. Somewhere in the house a bell was ringing furiously. Mechanically the man rose and made his way to the speaking-tube. He heard a voice speaking rapidly, urgently.

'Right. I'll be with you in a minute,' he promised, once again the doctor, alert, purposeful, vigorous. But before he went he mixed himself a stiff brandy and soda.

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TURPENTINE COUNTRY.

'DON'T be later than Saturday night,' said my friend, and passed away with the train. If he had said it at a reasonable time before the train went out it would not have been so bad, but to use his last words in such an injunction was intolerable, for, as Shakespeare has notably set forth, last words haunt the mind of those to whom they are addressed with a persistence and import never achieved by any other kind of speech. Saturday night! and it was now Wednesday morning and already turned half-past seven. Thus I stood on Bordeaux station and marvelled at being laid under such an arbitrary obligation as to someone else's time when I might take such a pleasure in biding my own. Still, my friend's admonition would be a spur, and a spur would no doubt be salutary, travelling Spain on a bicycle under the sun of June.

Sometimes dreams, sometimes waking experiences of the night appear to one at day-prime like a bloom of fruit which softens all thought. Our journey from Nantes appeared so now to me. The very antiquity of the railway coach we had travelled in was a thing not to be forgotten. In it we had lurched by moonlight through cornfields and mist-girdled orchards with a jolt and a sway that had a flavour of its own. Thus, half dozing, we had seen the houses change by indeterminate degrees from the hard style of Northern France to the southern look with red tile and whitened wall. And lastly we had rushed on to a strapping girder bridge and set the echoes chiming from rivet and lattice, while below, under hovering mists steeped in the dawn, a great river rolled.

With these things in the back of my mind, and in the front of it the near prospect of seeing the Pyrenees and crossing the Spanish border, I felt life to be a good-natured thing in spite of my friend's injunction. Having, with more difficulty than usual, delivered my bicycle from French railway officialdom, I put it to a gentle pace down towards the River Garonne and along the waterfront. I may forget the little I saw of Bordeaux, but I never shall forget the glimpse I had of this great river. As it passed by in the veiled shimmer of its morning glory, rolling its voluminous flood in perfect silence to the sea, it gave me the idea of an individual, a hero among

rivers, a stream that the Ancients might have conceived of as having its birth among the stars of the Zodiac and have worshipped it as sacred.

There is something of the classic feel in the town as well as the river, though of a lower order, as one might expect where Bacchus rules beside Aquarius.

Outside Bordeaux the country is all vineyards, and frequently is to be seen the commodious white *château* of the type that figures so gallantly on the labels of wine-bottles. Many small publicans by the roadside are their own vintners and set forth the good quality of their elixirs on their signboards. Beyond the fact that I was bound to be in Madrid on Saturday night I had no plan. I wanted to cross the Pyrenees by one of the less frequented routes and in the meantime to see the Landes by byways rather than highways. Accordingly I was now steering for a place called Mont de Marson.

Very soon the vineyards gave place to pines and heathlands, hills ceased and the air became spiced with a sweet resinous tang. Insects droned a melancholy hymn in tune with the perfume of the pine-woods, and melodious bells, proclaiming the whereabouts of goats or kine, issued from the dimness of the trees. This was the beginning of the Landes, a region I had often heard described as consisting of 'nothing but pine-trees and sandhills,' an impression, I think, gathered by those who had passed by in a train or a motor. On a bicycle it is at once evident that you are in a region that is different from other regions by an indefinite quality not at once easy to apprehend. Almost the first thing that strikes is the curiosity of monotony. Monotony is a strange and fascinating subject in which nobody seems to have specialised. It is so far misunderstood that the word has come to be almost universally identified with dullness. Yet I think it might be shown that monotony is greater and grander and more far-reaching than variety. Even in small things it shows itself a master-muse—in the rythm of a railway, in Gregorian music, in the measure of primitive dances, in the sea. The Landes are a paragon of monotony. The trees are all the same—the maritime pine which never develops any extravagance of colour, either green or blue or any imposing shape, but is always drab. Every tree is the producer of turpentine. Each bears its scar and its little porcelain cup. All grow from the dead level, and the undergrowth varies scarcely at all. The result of these things should be boredom, but

it is not ; so great is the spell of monotony when it hints to the soul the meaning of **FOR EVER**, the idea of on and on and on—recurring !

I wandered off into the forest at one point and accosted a young goatherd of a sombre look and steady, rather sullen eyes. I asked him about the trees, and how the turpentine was collected and refined.

‘ Why ’ said he, in his slow way, ‘ do you ask such questions ? ’

‘ Because I want to know,’ said I.

‘ To know ? ’ said he. ‘ What is there to know about the trees ? ’

‘ Because I have never seen before how they take the *terebenthine* from trees.’

A look of grand surprise dawned all over his face. ‘ Never seen the *terebenthine* tree before ! ’ Here was something quite new to his understanding : for him, no doubt, the whole world was Landes.

On this road the dust was inches thick, and if a motor car went by complete obscurity prevailed for many seconds. But, this being a bye-road, motorists were fortunately few. At Hostens I stayed for refreshment. There was a real feeling of the South about this place. At the little inn where I put up, all the shutters were closed to screen the sun, and crude blue muslin curtains hung in the doorways. I took my bicycle round to the stable-yard and walked into what might very well have been the kitchen of a Welsh mountain farm. Scrubbed wood tables stood on a tiled floor and a hearth fire smouldered under the bell-mouth of a big open chimney, while, like a frieze all round the walls, was a swarthy array of copper stew-pans. Madame was brisk and stout and of a twinkling eye. Evidently the grand monotony of *terebenthine* had not saddened her as it seemed to have done my young goatherd. When I arrived, the house and premises appeared deserted of all save herself. There were no signs of cooking or the ways and means thereof save the smouldering ashes on the big hearth. Coming from an England whose inns have suffered a sad dilapidation in their hospitality, I asked her somewhat shamefacedly if she could give me *déjeuner*.

‘ *Tout de suite ! Tout de suite, monsieur !* ’ she cried, seizing a ladle and hitting on an obscure bit of furniture in the corner, whereat three lean cats came forth and loped dejectedly away. Then, still brandishing the ladle, she hustled me into a little private parlour, and crying out again ‘ At once ! At once the luncheon ! ’ she left me. From that moment there ensued the most alarming

clatter and scolding. Three new voices made themselves heard as if, by a stroke of magic, Madame had transformed the cats into two girls and a boy. At the top of her voice mine hostess seemed to be using the most vituperative language, for which in return she got nothing but peals of laughter. Noises of fire-irons and crockery hurtled in the air, while outside a green parrot in a cage emulated the din by screaming ejaculations in patois French. There is something uncanny in hearing a parrot talk French for the first time, in fact the whole thing was so out of the common that I awaited results in an electrified state, feeling by induction a strong desire to hammer on the furniture and shout at the top of my voice also. My surprise was not diminished when, in less than ten minutes, a demure damsel brought in the daintily served and garnished first-fruits of my meal, a generous recollection of which will always remain with me.

My repast having been fairly launched, there fell a lull in the kitchen regions. Whether I felt eyes on me or not I don't know, but I turned my head and found myself being furtively scrutinised by a figure standing half in and half out of the stable door. My counter-observation dislodged him, and he came across the yard and addressed the parrot, acting the make-believe that it was the parrot all along he had found himself staring at. There was something extremely odd about the cut of this fellow. His voice was rich in a curious cackling drollery that must have warmed the cockles of the parrot's heart to hear. Indeed, unless beheld, it was impossible to tell which was man and which parrot. This vehement reciprocity over, the man repaired to the café, which was a room on the other side of the house, overlooking the road. It was easy to deduce that he had settled down and was entertaining the rest of the company who were by now forgathered there. If there had been laughter in the house before, when my lunch was preparing, it was nothing compared with the bursts of merriment that followed the utterances of this man. I thought there was a Latin sound about some of his exclamations.

Having paid my score, I made my egress through the café. All mirth was immediately suppressed ; I thought the company looked a trifle sheepish. I began to suspect the cause of their merriment. I asked some questions of the parrot-man, which he answered with great gravity.

‘ You see,’ said I, ‘ I am a foreigner.’

He bowed and could not resist a twinkle of the eye towards the company.

'Of what country am I, do you think?' said I.
'Italian, I suppose,' said he, with great assurance.
'I am English,' said I.

His face fell and he stared at me blankly. I have seldom seen a man so put out of countenance. Poor fellow! He had mistaken my nationality, so that all his jokes at my expense must have fallen terribly flat.

From Hostens I cycled along and along and along, and met nothing but silence and dead level and maritime pine on all sides, while my bicycle, with true national feeling, recorded our progress in English miles. Often before in France I had been cheered by this scrap of native prejudice in a foreign land. But now the persistent tick of the cyclometer annoyed me, and I got off my bicycle and sat on the root of a fallen tree. The manner of the inn and the way of the man with the *Punch* and *Judy* voice savoured of a simplicity and jaunty way of life that must have obtained in pre-mechanical ages. Agreeable to paradox there seemed something a little solemn about it. Who could doubt that such traits were referable to the environment? I have heard it said in Kent that the boys of Hythe used to believe in the existence of six continents, Europe, Asia, Africa, America, Australia, and Romney Marsh. This if not a fact in the letter was certainly true in the spirit. In the same way I suppose the Landes is a sixth continent to those who live there. But for the ominous words of my companion I felt that where I sat I would like to linger indefinitely. For here all the senses were ministered to and were satisfied. The soft and sombre aspect of the trees was pleasing enough, the air agreeable, for the strong sun was clouded and not too hot. And there was a peculiar quality in the silence of the place that seemed to the imagination like the pile on velvet. It was not indeed true silence, for the insect world was alive and busy all round. But our vocabulary of noises is so poor that we are constantly compelled to describe an acoustic state as silence that should properly have a word all its own. Silences, as we loosely call them, are so many and so varied and yet so characteristic that we really ought to have names for them as the Faroe Islander has for different kinds of fogs. Here I found that my *velvet* silence was bound up inseparably with that subtle and inimitable smell of the oozing pinewoods, nay even with the look of them: the whole was a complete and perfect impression of interdependent parts.

A little farther on down the road I came to a kind of green oasis in the interminable forest of turpentine. Here the road was widened

to a small circus and deciduous trees grew. A tiny church stood on a clear space of grass at the left of the road, and elsewhere houses peeped from the sweeping bosage of Spanish chestnuts. There was a droning sound of children singing all together, but no one was to be seen about and nothing stirred. The church was in the Norman style. I peered through a crack in the door and saw within its painted groining and all its small furniture of worship. There was something about it that seemed to reflect my own thoughts of the country and the people: Peace and the simple heart. Of itself it was a sermon in stones.

I stayed for some ten minutes in this village of Mano, but I saw no one and I fancy that no one saw me. And still the children droned on at their singing as I rode away and compassed another solitary stretch, coming at last to Sore. Sore struck me as a remarkable village. Approaching it, the landscape takes on a sudden erratic aspect. Small defiles of bracken-grown red sand-stone light and variegate the monotony of the pines, sharp little uplands appear and smooth-swarded lawns, in clearings whence hay had just been carried. The trees lose their regularity and tend to gnarl and cut individual figures. Then, Nature having prepared you for a Japanese scene, the road zig-zags, and you next discover yourself among houses so picturesque and yet so nondescript that they might be utterly Oriental or utterly rustic. I cannot in the least recall their architecture—only the impression that they gave me, which was of red-tiled roofs, of wooden verandas and walls, much transparent blue smoke and, staring at me from the background, singularly ancient people dressed in costume of the olden time. In an instant all had vanished with another zig-zag of the road and I was in a modern French village.

Here I entered a shop and addressed a little old lady on the subject of the weather. When we had conversed for a few moments she suddenly burst into tears. Yet in spite of the violence of her sobs she contrived to explain the cause of them. Her son, she said, was, in three days time to be operated on in a hospital in Bordeaux, for appendicitis. As I had experienced a similar fate I imagined that by testifying I could give her some comfort. But it was futile. The more I testified to the skill of surgeons and the rapidity of my own recovery so much the more a great deal did she cry. At last I plucked a picture-postcard from its place in a stand and asked her tersely the price of it. Instantly she brushed aside her tears: the spirit of business kindled in her eye, and she

said in an altered and awe-struck voice, 'Four sous, Monsieur—would you like it ?' 'Yes,' said I. There were no more tears.

In the evening I came to Labrit at about half-past nine. Here there were two inns. The one I selected was, to the unaccustomed eye, a curious establishment. It was spacious and tumble-down, with all the floors laid deep in sawdust. By now the light was so dim that the place with its bare walls and mysterious corners and recesses was reminiscent of the inevitable hospice of the time-honoured robber story. I was shown into a large parlour where a feeble lamp was already beginning to have an ascendancy over the last of the sunset. A cadaverous, wolfish-looking Frenchman sat in a remote place eating. There was no decoration in the room, but an immense poster setting forth in lurid colour the announcement of a bull-fight shortly to take place at Mont de Marson. The grand shindy of Hostens was lacking here in the preparation of my meal. The soup course glided in even as I sat down to table. After a little the meagre Frenchman and myself drifted into a desultory conversation. The bull-fight, he admitted, was not allowed by law. But the law was easy to evade on the one hand and on the other the Government found it less trouble to wink than to prosecute. Spanish matadors frequently came over to give a bull-fight at Mont de Marson. Much money, he said, was made thereby.

There was something particularly ghastly in the blood-appeal of the poster. It reflected the sordid horror of the fact of torturing animals as a money-making concern. The meagre Frenchman continued to talk in a voice that sounded to become more peevish as our acquaintance grew ; the lamp continued to shed a baleful, and ever-dwindling ray and I began to think that nothing was sound in this house but the meal (which was good beyond dispute) when the door burst open and four beautiful pointer dogs sprang into the room and instantly divided themselves into two foraging parties, one couple going off to reconnoitre the meagre Frenchman and the remainder devoting themselves to me. At their heels came the landlord. He was a burly fellow. He affected socks below knickerbockers and was in shirt-sleeves with his hands pocketed. Every motion of him seemed to bespeak strength, resolution and fine reliability. He bowed to us without unpocketing his hands, ordered his dogs down and said he hoped we supped well. Turning to me he asked if I desired a bed. A few minutes ago, in spite of my fatigue, with the heat and dust, I had decided to push on to

Mont de Marson, but at the sight of this man I altered my plans and desired him to give me a bed. He half turned and issued an order, and said to me 'In ten minutes, Monsieur, it will be ready for you.'

'But I shall have to rise early,' said I.

'You can be woken and have *café* at any time you please ?'

'Half-past four ? Would that give you trouble ?'

'In this house' said he, 'nothing gives trouble.'

After dinner the meagre Frenchman vanished suddenly like a flame blown out and the landlord and myself sat on a bench outside and watched the moon rise over the quaint little forest village. He spoke of the French action in the Ruhr. He had no doubts about the rights of the matter and professed himself furious with the English for holding back. I, on the other hand, had no misgivings as to the English policy, but I did not attempt much argument even though he denounced my countrymen and regarded me sternly on that account.

The moon lacked but a day for the achievement of her perfect zone. When I looked at her shedding her brilliance on the pine trees it came to me with a thrill that she would not pass the full before she shone on me in Spain.

The landlord, his brawny arm raised above his head, bearing a wretched drooping candle with the gesture of a flambeau, conducted me up a large plain wood staircase, across a bare and spacious landing to my bedroom. As we were about to part for the night we touched the subject of the war. 'What !' said he. 'You were at Hardicourt in September 1916 ?' Immediately the rancour of the Ruhr was gone, we were not even any longer landlord and guest. Our hearts were touched by the old flame ; we were brothers.

After a ride of twenty-four kilometres through a tender dewy dawn in the forests of turpentine, my bicycle and myself were carried by train to Laruns where we arrived between three and four o'clock. My maps had showed me that from Laruns a road marked as being contemptible passed over the Pyrenees crossing a saddle some six thousand feet above sea-level. I argued therefore from the cartographic description that it would be little used as a highway into Spain and that I might make my way into that romantic country in a solitary and romantic fashion. As far as the road was concerned I was quite right, but my disgust was unbounded on finding electrical operations in full swing along this valley.

One of the strangest and most distressing signs of the times is the total lack of any organised benignant policy towards Nature. In the ancient days Nature was worshipped. Men studied how not to spoil her when they built. In the Middle Ages she was venerated as being a mirror of the Godhead. For the common tasks of life and the compassing of great achievements men drew their inspiration from her. Till now her mystery has held the world spell-bound with a gracious reverence. But in this new era, though all are taught to 'study Nature' by rote, no one is withheld from pilfering where they will from our great unreplaceable heirloom of the ages. That beauty can play any real effective part in the economy of a nation no one stays to think about. A Ministry of Nature forsooth! Horse-power is the cry, the era-shibboleth. Necessity and the craze of a vogue are confounded and private enterprise turns into squanderable cash the capital that poets, moralists and seers were wont to turn into imperishable gain for all the world. Surely people fly to extremes without considering a middle way for, given that horse-power is a necessity of the new time, there are certainly ways of contriving it so that the whole countryside shall not be artistically ruined by its production.

The man in the city decides that it is cheaper to hang wires in the air than to carry conductors underground in cables, and a whole landscape that has taken aeons to compose is instantly reft of its proportions, and thereto its power to stimulate the mind and give rest to the soul, by an array of poles and wires and insulators. Even when the railway craze was at its height the companies were considerate, and spent far more pains and money than the needs of structure required in trying to modify the disfigurations they caused. Now, no one cares, for public opinion in the matter of taste and principle is moribund. But while we wait for legislation all the artifice in the world cannot heal Nature once she has been maimed.

It was almost four o'clock before I left Laruns. No one could tell me anything about the road or what I should find on the other side of the frontier. It might have been the way to another world, so little did they know about it. Some said the road was too bad to traverse at all. Others averred that the top of the pass was closed with snow, and one old man looked at me knowingly, and said I must on no account try and cross the mountains to-day. 'For,' said he, 'there are bears in the upper forests.' In short, Spain was as much a *terra incognita* to these people who lived

at its very door-step as it is to an English countryman. The only reliable thing I heard said was that it was thirty kilometres to the top of the pass and up-hill all the way. This I found to be very true.

Laruns is situated at the top of a narrow valley through which, in a gorge of grand precipitous sides, descends a thunderous torrent. From the village the road swings up and, with a swerve, disappears into a tunnel which, when passed, shuts out from view the lower valley with its large scope of foothills and of the plains beyond, and confines the eye to the straitness of the gorge, its massive overhang of trees, its moisture and its thunder. Everywhere were evident the signs of engineering activity, a light railway laid on one side of the road, lorries snoring up hill and racketing down, felled timber, poles, pipes and scarifications. And all this held for about fourteen miles of uncyclable hill, minimising and neutralising the grandeur of the mountains. From deciduous trees to pines and from pines to box the road led up, and all would have been wonderful to see and to tell of but for this subtle gnat-sting of human insolence.

But at last it was all done with and the little road, returned to its primitive simplicity, led me into a wide upland glade of dwarf beech trees with knotted trunks and gnarled waving branches. The whole day the weather had been dull and hazy. Up here it was clearer, though only on occasions did I see the higher peaks whose jagged profiles were barely softened by the snow and the kindling glow of evening. There was a certain mildness about this valley with its grassy flanks spreading upwards as far as could be seen, its river running just below the unfenced road in flat pools and shallows, and its woods bright with wild flowers which gave it a character pleasantly and unexpectedly arcadian. One could fancy it in the moonlight a haunt of the gentler fays, their minstrels and their morris men. But the next valley was different, treeless, strewn with huge boulders, overcapped with heavy, rolling clouds, and descending deep below the road to a torrent bed of foaming waters. Moreover, whereas there had been no signs of human occupation in the glade of the dwarf beeches, here there were camps of herdsmen with large flocks of sheep, some penned in stone enclosures, others scattered in patches on the hill-sides shaking their bells as they grazed with a distant mournful resonance. The shepherds lived in large tent-like shelters made of skins and pitched among the boulders, with their wives and their little ones, their cattle and their dogs. I spoke with some of them. They

were a simple, rugged folk. Though they were only a mile or two from the frontier they shook their heads and had no knowledge of what lay beyond. At the head of this valley the snow lay in patches just above the road, and in more than one place right across it. But it must have been fallen a long time for it was stained and crusted. This was the last valley of the ascent, and when I came out of it it was past nine o'clock, and the light was beginning to fail. From it the road led still up into a vast theatre of crags and peaks with a large undulating expanse of swampy ground in the midst. I passed the last French milestone announcing that the frontier was but the fraction of a kilometre off and I expected at any time to be challenged. At the summit the road turns to the south. I passed two deserted buildings and saw a pile of yellow quartz stones. The road started to slope downwards and a Spanish milestone appeared.

I was over the border. My bicycle spun beneath me at a furious rate and brought me suddenly face to face with a grand view worth all the miles of climbing I had done. It was a view of red rocks in pinnacles and turrets and bastions and of crags, some toned by the twilight to purple, some by the sunset to orange, while high up over great snow-capped Pyrenean peaks came the full moon and tipped with soft crystalline lustre the crests of innumerable smaller hills that lay below. I was in Spain and though there was only the milestone and the little heap of quartz and the falling gradient to tell me surely of it, the change in Nature was more complete than I have ever seen in passing from one country to another. And this became more and more apparent as my bicycle coasted headlong down the winding way. On the French side, except for some of the wild flowers and for the scale of the mountains, I might have been among the hills of Wales or Scotland. There was nothing particularly unusual in the look of the torrents or the greenery or the grey rock. But on this side the rock was red, there was hardly any greenery; instead there were great banks and precipices of parched clay or mud, also red. On the far side there had been no cultivation all the way up and the trees had quite ceased. Here there were curious little fields of grain and strange isolated poplar trees that grew not at all after the French style of poplar but had about them an oriental look. On and down I sped, seeing neither gendarme nor civilian, the unreality of the moonlight and the scene lending me courage over a precarious way.

EDMUND VALE.

THE DIVINING ROD.

BY ROWLAND BURGESS.

To get the true atmosphere, I ought to preface this paper with a learned disquisition upon the use of the divining rod from the dawn of history, but unfortunately (or perhaps fortunately) I am unable to do so. The Library of the British Museum is far away, and I have never availed myself of the many opportunities offered to me of acquiring a set of the 'Encyclopædia Britannica' (9th edition, complete in fumed oak book-case) upon payment of a few shillings monthly for the term of my natural life. Neither can I state with any certainty whether or not Imhotep the Wise—the architect who became Grand Vizier at the Court of King Zoser, about the year 3000 B.C.—in planning the water supply for the King's Palace in Egypt, used the hazel twig (or its Oriental equivalent) as our own architect did when selecting the site of our cottage on my sister's land in Somerset.

Moses, we are told, struck with his rod the Rock in Horeb, bringing forth water for the thirsty Israelites; allowing for the poetic imagery of the Old Testament, this may perhaps be taken as the earliest authentic record of the diviner's art,

From Mount Horeb to the coombes of Exmoor is a far cry, yet it would seem that the ancestors of many of our village folk must have touched the mantle of Moses. Here the 'dowser' is not regarded with awe, as the possessor of supernatural powers; the difference between himself and his neighbours is one of degree rather than of kind, as most of the men hereabouts seem to possess some trace of the gift.

No hill-farmer in these parts would dream of sinking a well without first calling in the water-finder to mark the site—and 'wisdom is justified of her children.'

Virtue is not inherent in the hazel twig, some men preferring the blackthorn, or other hedge growths. Indeed, one of the fraternity—an aged road-mender—who recently located an underground spring for me (which proved to be so powerful when tapped at the depth of six feet that the water rose and overflowed the meadow) uses nothing but his extended arms in his preliminary survey. He goes through a sort of ritual before commencing,

standing bolt upright, breathing deeply, and swinging his arms vigorously for a few minutes ; then, when the blood has been sent tingling to his finger-tips, he wanders about quartering the ground, moving his arms with the action of a swimmer. Not until he has 'felt' water in this way does he use the hazel twig to indicate the exact spot where it is nearest to the surface.

This old man lays no claim to any occult power ; 'lactricity o' zum zart' is the explanation he offers, which may well prove to be an intelligent anticipation of the truth.

I must confess that while still a prisoner of the city, wise in my own conceit like other superior and enlightened town-dwellers, I had looked upon the water-finder as a charlatan, or, in all charity, as a victim of self-deception.

Given a man with an eye for the contour of the land with perhaps an instinctive aptitude for detecting signs of water, it seemed possible to account for his success, and for the peculiar behaviour of the twig by an unconscious muscular response to the preconceived idea, without attributing to him any conscious fraud. Since coming to live in the West Country I have had very convincing proof that I was mistaken.

I have mentioned the architect ; he it was who first upset my complacent scepticism, and was later on my partner in certain experiments which, I think, throw a glimmer of light upon a very dark place.

We live, my sister and I, in the house of dreams-come-true, a house low and long, with lattice windows and deep eaves ; a façade of cream and chocolate, looking upon a garden bounded by a trout-stream, where upon summer evenings, when the light is fading, my rod and I——(I am sorry ! I find the trout as troublesome in my articles as Mr. Dick found King Charles' head in his Memorial. It shall not happen again.)

Before we realised our dream, we passed through a nightmare, visiting country cottages which the agents assured us were precisely what we required. Some were just possible, others hardly probable, and in the end we decided to build for ourselves.

In a cloud castle, earthly details such as drainage and water supply may conveniently be ignored ; it is otherwise when bricks and mortar are in question.

Our friend the architect, who uses his gift of divination in the ordinary course of his profession, came with us to the proposed building site to decide upon these matters. This was my first

personal experience of work with the divining rod—and it was sufficiently astonishing.

He cut from the hedge a thin Y-shaped twig, with the forks about nine inches long. Turning his hands palms upwards, he grasped one fork tightly in each hand, keeping the point of the twig upright, and straining the forks slightly apart; then, with arms extended, he walked slowly along the hill-side. Presently, at a point above the building site, the twig began to bend, turning inward toward his body, twisting in his hands, which he kept rigid, until it was pointing directly downward; as he passed on it regained the upright position. I am not unduly credulous, and it seemed entirely possible that the turning of the twig might be the result of involuntary muscular action. Even so, one is not much nearer to a solution of the mystery; it remains to be explained why such muscular contraction should take place above running water.

At my friend's suggestion, I then took the twig in my own hands, and tried my luck; with me it was dead and still.

I found also, that with my hands in the correct position—knuckles down and the fingers closed—the wrist muscles were bound to some extent when the arms were extended, and that I could not deflect the twig from its original position in any marked degree, even though I tried to do so, without altering the position of my hands.

Doubt still lingered in my mind; I clung obstinately to my original theory of the preconceived idea, and of subconscious muscular reaction in relation thereto; but my faith in it was wearing thin.

Tactfully I suggested this possibility to my friend, but he would have none of it.

'That's an old fallacy,' he replied tolerantly. 'Try it in circuit with me for a bit; then tell me what you think about it.'

I did not understand him. Judges, I knew, worked in circuit, with their attendant scribes and Pharisees; but architects—or diviners! . . .

He explained his meaning. The divining rod, it appeared, would often function when shared by two persons, provided that one of them was a 'sensitive,' and that the circuit was closed by physical contact.

It sounded difficult—rather like a conjuring trick—but I tried to believe him, and placed myself at his disposal.

It proved to be quite simple, really. We stood side by side and clasped hands, taking each of us one fork of the twig in our free hand, and slowly marched.

I forgot the absurdity of our appearance when we approached the hidden stream which flowed some thirty feet below us. The twig was certainly moving in my hand, the point bending over as though some irresistible force were dragging it down ; I could feel the end of it scraping the skin of my fingers as it turned.

The sensation was most uncanny, and by no means pleasant—as when one inadvertently grasps some small living creature.

Well, there it was ; I could no more doubt that the divining rod, in the hands of an adept, turns toward water, than I could that the magnetic needle turns to the North.

Excessive zeal, often outrunning discretion, is the mark of the new convert to any cause. I had touched the fringe of a mystery old as the hills—and the springs which flow from them—and very earnestly I desired more light.

That evening after dinner, when building problems should have been discussed—my sister and I were the guests of our friend the architect for a few days—I could think of nothing but hidden springs and hazel twigs.

At last I saw my way one step forward. In the days of long ago, I once owned an electrical toy whereon small figures and balls of pith were made to dance when a vulcanite disc was revolved ; it seemed that there might be some analogy between the movements of these small figures and that of the divining rod ; some current—electrical or otherwise—generated by the friction of the water in its passage through the earth, of which all of us may be conductors in varying degree.

I was quite convinced that the movement of the twig was not due to any personal guidance, yet, as I had held only one fork, the evidence was one-sided.

It occurred to me that it might be possible to establish the circuit, or to reinforce the current, while *both* forks were in my own hands, by personal contact with the 'live wire.' My friend, who was keenly interested, readily agreed to a morning of experiment in a meadow behind his house ; experiments which led to a very curious discovery.

The meadow was on a steep hill-side, and beyond the strong layered hedge on the lower side there was a sharp drop of about thirty feet to river-level.

First my friend went over the ground, and obtained ample evidence of water beneath ; then I tried it alone, but could not detect the slightest sign of movement ; then he held one of my wrists—again with no result.

Finally he placed a hand upon each of my wrists as he walked beside me. The effect was magical ; the twig seemed instantly to be endowed with life, quivering and twisting in my hands as we passed over what the expert diagnosed as a network of small streams flowing through faults in the rock, not far beneath the surface. It was quite a relief to come to a dry patch, as a curious state of nerve tension seems to be induced—whether from excitement, or, as the diviners maintain, due to the passage of the current through the body, I am unable to say. My friend declares that after a long spell of it he often has to spend the following day in bed.

At length we grew weary of pacing the hill-side, but before going in I thought I would go over the ground once more alone ; to my complete amazement, I found that my friend's gift had been transmitted to me, by the 'laying on of hands !'

He was as much astonished as was I ; neither of us had dreamed of such a possibility. I appeared to have been 'magnetised' in some fashion, even as a bar of steel by the lode-stone.

Now that my wrists were free, the power seemed stronger than before. I gripped the hazel convulsively, but so insistent was the movement, that the thin end of one of the forks was broken in my hands—twisted asunder.

Taking a fresh grip, I went farther afield over a portion of the meadow which we had not yet tried. For some distance the twig remained quiescent ; then at a point near the end of the field it dipped so suddenly, and so violently, that it snapped asunder at the junction of the forks.

My friend told me to look over the hedge at this place ; there, immediately below me, was a strong spring welling up at the foot of the hill, forming a small tributary of the river.

Holding the two pieces, one in each hand, and pressing them together at the point, I could still feel them move, but the difficulty of keeping them in contact confused the movements.

With a fresh twig I tried different holds. It made little difference ; even when holding each fork of the twig with the thumb and forefinger only the effect was quite strong, but in this position it was too easy to give a little involuntary assistance for the indications to be quite reliable.

The correct hold—slightly strained and unnatural—eliminates the personal factor as far as possible.

My sister then tried the same experiment, with the same result, except that in her case the 'induced current' grew rapidly weaker, and in ten minutes it had faded altogether.

In my own case I could detect no weakening of the power at the end of an hour, nor did I feel any after-effects.

I fondly hoped that the touch of the adept's hand had evoked a latent gift, but when I tried it later in the day, only the faintest trace of the power remained, and by the following morning it had vanished completely.

The antics of the divining rod were bewildering in their variety. Sometimes the dip was sharp and sudden, taking one unawares, the point remaining downward until a new grip was taken, as though the current had been suddenly cut off; at other times it turned gradually, and regained the upright position as one passed on, either by a retrograde motion, or by making a complete revolution; sometimes it turned inward, sometimes outward; yet through it all one sensed the operation of some natural law. On going over the same ground a second time, the movements were repeated in the same sequence, and when I got my friend to walk beside me, carrying a second twig, the behaviour of both was identical.

The governing factors—or some of them—are doubtless the depth, the volume, and the direction of the flow; also the angle at which the stream is crossed.

There I must leave it. There seems to be a wide field for investigation open to some scientific observer, better qualified than myself, provided he can find a diviner able—and willing—to co-operate with him. Possibly before we are much older we may see this ancient mystery reduced to an exact science.

THE JACOBITES.

BY J. J. BELL.

ON an afternoon in July two young men clad in rough but smartly-cut homespuns lay at ease on mountain heather and looked down on as wild a scene as Nature provides in all the wild West Highlands of Scotland. But a heat haze veiled the harshness of the nearer shores as well as the distant Isle of Skye and its lesser neighbours, and the sound and loch lying immediately beneath shimmered in the sunshine. It was a still world, save for the murmur of bees and the occasional screech of a sea-bird down yonder on the rocks.

One of the young men had spread a map in front of him; the other, face almost touching the heather, eyes half closed, smoked his pipe in a fitful fashion.

Said he of the map, lifting a lean, brown countenance :

‘ Cameron, it’s almost exactly a hundred and eighty years since it all happened ! ’

‘ Since what happened ? ’ muttered the smoker.

‘ Your Bonnie Prince Charlie. . . . Wasn’t it right down there that he made his landing ? ’

‘ And a year later his departure—yes. But, my dear American, what do you know, or care, about Bonnie Prince Charlie ? ’

‘ I’m as interested as I’m ignorant. I suppose the craving has been aroused by the action of this scenery on my drop of Scottish blood.’

‘ First time I’ve heard you boast of that, though of course the “ Murray ” in your name—’

‘ I’m not boasting, now. I don’t even suspect where the Murray originally came from. As for Prince Charlie, I’ll be frank and confess that since my school-days, when I read a story in which he figured, I had forgotten all about him till, on the ship coming over, I read a novel—’

‘ Oh, novels ! If you want the truth, read history.’

‘ By the truth you mean the facts ? ’

‘ Well, aren’t the facts the truth ? ’

‘ Never the whole truth. History chills me. It’s like the shaking of dry bones. . . . However, I was going to say that the

man who owned the novel—his name, by the way, was Cameron—assured me that Romance, so far as Scotland was concerned, died out with the last Jacobite rebellion—'

'Romance! It wasn't the sort of romance that bears looking into—if any romance does. Once more, my dear Murray Wilder, read history!'

Murray Wilder began to fold up the map, remarking, 'You rather disappoint my expectations. For years, ever since you gave me the invitation, just before we parted in France, you have been writing about our proposed tramp through the Prince Charlie Country—'

'A convenient name for these parts,—and isn't the scenery up to your expectations?'

'Scenery's all right. But somehow I thought of your making a sort of pious pilgrimage, and of myself listening all the time to "tales of old, unhappy, far-off things and battles long ago"—I don't guarantee my quotations.'

The Scotsman smiled. 'Without that map of yours I should not know, at this moment, where I was. It had merely seemed an ideal route for a tramp, though the roads are sometimes rotten. . . . Yes, yes, I'm a Cameron all right; and my forebears fought and bled lots for Charlie; saw their homes burned, their women and children starved, murdered—and worse; and went more or less blithely to the scaffold for Charlie's sake; none, indeed, suffered more than the Camerons. But the clan blood lost the fever long since. You can't combine that sort of thing with successful commerce, as an American of all peoples should know.'

'Of course you have lived all your life in a city.'

'True. Yet I should be seriously astonished to learn that any person in these parts would mildly resent your referring to the late Charles Edward Stuart as the Pretender, and not as the Prince. In fact, I should doubt whether he is ever mentioned, except by tourists with guide-books. There used to be a Jacobite Society, or something of the sort, but I imagine it has about petered out. . . . Well, shall we be getting along? It will take us all our time to reach our night's lodging with less than savage appetites. Pity the mist has come down on the islands.'

'Mist has come down on more things than them,' murmured Wilder, getting up. 'I haven't a powerful imagination, but to me these glens and mountains are already peopled by ghosts.'

'Day after to-morrow,' said his companion, 'we shall go through

Glenfinnan, and you will find a monument on the spot where the Jacobite Standard was raised in 1745. It was there that Charles waited almost alone, doubtful of receiving support, till he heard the skirl of the pipes and saw Lochiel come over the hill with his eight hundred Camerons—the first of the clans to gather.'

'Come!' cried Wilder, 'you're proud of that, anyway!'

'It was a great adventure,' Cameron grudgingly allowed, 'but—'

'A rotten business proposition,' finished the other drily. 'Oh, you Scots! And yet, I believe you would do it again!'

'I'm afraid the Prince would wait a while if he came again to Glenfinnan.'

They crossed a stretch of moor and regained the road—a wearing one for the pedestrian, a test for the motorist and his car. Its surface was of loose gravel and treacherous little cobbles; it wound inland in tortuous fashion, rising and falling steeply.

They had covered a couple of miles or so when briskly descending, Cameron staggered, stumbled and all but fell; then drew himself up on one foot, supported by his stick.

'Hell!' he muttered between his teeth, 'that was a wrench! Wilder, old man, I've got to sit down.'

Wilder helped him to the roadside, and he sank upon a clump of heather, pale, sweating with pain.

After a while he attempted to hobble with his arm round his friend's shoulders, but the agony conquered determination, and he returned to the roadside.

'This is devilish awkward. It's a lonely road. We're miles from anywhere. I'm sorrier than I can say, Wilder,' he said apologetically.

'Don't worry about me, my friend. My job is to find something on wheels—but, first, the nearest habitation.' They had passed no dwelling since leaving the moor. 'Wait a moment!'

Wilder scrambled up the hillside and scanned the glen, which at first seemed desolate. But he came down looking hopeful.

'There's a house—a good-sized one—in the hollow yonder. Shouldn't think it's much more than a mile away. Sure to get help there. Shan't be long.'

'Go cannily,' said Cameron, 'or you may repeat my folly. No need to take your knapsack.'

A moment later Wilder was racing downhill. Cameron took out his knife, and whetted it on a stone preparatory to cutting off his boot.

Wilder was breathing hard when he reached the house, a square one of grey stone, with a look of age, especially about the small-paned windows.

To his knock a housemaid opened the heavy door—a pretty creature, all shyness and native hospitality.

‘Be pleased to come in,’ she said, while he was recovering his breath.

‘Thank you,’ he said, ‘but——’ and proceeded to explain his errand.

Before long it became apparent that she did not understand half his words. Possibly she had not sufficient English; also, his speech may have puzzled her.

‘Be pleased to come in,’ she said again, rosy; and just then, to Wilder’s relief, the mistress of the house came upon the scene.

A very old lady she was, yet with health on the lined countenance under the white hair; and though walking with a stout ebony staff she carried herself fairly erect. Her greeting was dignified, but her voice had all the kindness of the Highland born.

‘Did I hear that there had been an accident, sir?’

Briefly he informed her. Without comment she turned and called ‘Marjorie!’

A girl, tall, dark, and, as Wilder noted, of proud bearing, stepped into the hall and joined them.

‘This gentleman,’ said the old lady—Wilder and the girl exchanged bows—‘seeks assistance for his friend who has sprained, or perhaps broken, his ankle on the road up yonder. Tell Ranald to bring round the carriage at once, and Flora to prepare a room. And now, sir,’—as the girl retired—‘be pleased to enter and accept of some refreshment till the carriage is ready. It will take you to your friend sooner than you could go on foot.’

Gently waving aside his apologies, she conducted him through a narrow hall into a handsome dining-room, panelled with dark wood to the ceiling, the sombre effect being mitigated by the gilt frames enclosing portraits of eighteenth-century ladies and gentlemen, all wearing the tartan. A note of cheerfulness was supplied, however, by the coal and peat fire in the ancient grate.

She invited him to sit by the hearth in an arm-chair of Jacobean design, and passed to the sideboard. A similar chair stood opposite, and Wilder, with a sudden rising of curiosity, noticed that its seat was closed by a cord of crimson silk stretching between the arms. And while he wondered, his hostess came back to offer him, from a lovely old salver, cake and wine.

Wilder's sense of chivalry rose up at such service being accorded by so old a lady to a complete stranger, but he had the wit to accept the situation. When he had helped himself, she set the salver on the table, drew out a chair, and seated herself. A second glass of wine had been poured, and with a courteous look at her guest she raised and touched it to her lips.

Presently it dawned on Wilder that she was not going to ask any questions, and he proceeded to tell something of the walking tour which had been interrupted, if not ended, in so unfortunate a fashion. While he was speaking the girl came in and, making a sign that he should not stop, seated herself near the window.

'Well, well,' said the old lady, when he paused, 'it is a great pity indeed, but a good thing it happened so near to my home.'

'You are too kind,' stammered Wilder. 'Cameron will be distressed at making so much disturbance in your house. If you would allow the carriage to take us back to—'

'Mr. Wilder,' she said warmly, 'I should have told you my name sooner. It is that of your friend, and a Cameron is ever welcome in the house of a Cameron.' And raising her eyes to the large portrait above the fireplace, she touched once more the glass to her lips.

The girl spoke quietly, 'My grandmother meant to add that a Cameron's friend is welcome also.'

'Surely, surely!' cried the hostess, turning back quickly to the guest. 'Forgive an old woman's wandering wits. I have some very good friends in America.'

Wilder had almost found courage to mention his Scottish blood when the sound of wheels on gravel brought them to their feet.

'And you will take this in case your friend should feel faint,' said Mrs. Cameron, putting a flask in his hand. 'Ranald, my coachman, is a Red Cross man; he learned much in the war; you can trust to his skill.' At the outer door she added, 'Assure your friend that he will be welcome and no trouble whatever.' In her eagerness she pronounced it 'whateffer.'

There was something in her voice, in her eyes, that caused Wilder to stumble in his thanks.

'All young men,' she said softly; 'all young men. . . .' Her voice seemed to fail her. Her granddaughter gently took her arm and nodded to Wilder to get on board the carriage.

He was driven away still wondering.

A room on the ground floor had been made ready for the sufferer. A wheeled chair—the late Mr. Cameron had been an invalid in his old age—awaited him at the door. It was Cameron's turn to wonder and marvel.

His hostess refused to let him talk till his injury had received attention. Her reception of him could not have been kinder; nevertheless, her glance had been shrewd as he was borne up from the carriage. When he had been wheeled to his room she gave a little sigh of satisfaction, and whispered to Marjorie, 'Both gentlemen !'

Ranald, middle-aged and bearded, with the hand of a giant and the touch of a woman, diagnosed the injury as a severe sprain, and treated it accordingly.

Cameron refused to lie down, and inquired as to the motor cars in the neighbourhood.

Ranald smiled soothingly, saying softly, 'Surely you will not be so hard, sir, on my leddy's hospitality. But I will ask her.'

He returned as one who, if he liked, could say 'I told you so !'

'My leddy's compliments, sir, and it would not be possible to get a car to-night; but if you have any messages to send they can easily be sent; and if you are feeling able my leddy will be glad to see you, and Mr. Wilder, now in the drawing-room. Dinner will be served in five minutes.'

The drawing-room, as Wilder immediately noticed, was in direct contrast to the room in which he had already sat. White enamel, old Sheraton, gay chintz and flowers were its features. The hostess presented Cameron to her granddaughter, remembered in time, and, with some amusement, presented Wilder also.

Without delay she entered into conversation, and before dinner was announced had discovered a connection—a very remote one, indeed—between her family and Cameron's. A trifle, yet it sufficed to dispel the last feeling of awkwardness on Cameron's part, and on Wilder's, too.

On moving to the dining-room Mrs. Cameron requested that the invalid chair should be placed at the head of the table, and took pains to see that the injured limb was properly supported. Consequently Wilder found himself facing the girl, and also the portrait over the fireplace. At first the portrait merely supplied a refuge for his gaze when he realised, as he did, often enough, that it had lingered over long on the features of Miss Marjorie Cameron; but later it began to attract him for its own sake. It represented a

young man, tall, lithe, debonair, with chestnut hair and dark eyes, garbed elegantly in full Highland costume with rapier and dirk. More than once Wilder was tempted to inquire concerning the original, but recollection of the solemnity with which his hostess had raised her eyes to the picture deterred him.

The repast was simple, though the table appointments were exquisite. There was some wonderful old silver, intriguing to Wilder, who was something of a connoisseur. A broad, shallow bowl filled with water and floating pansies occupied the centre. Mrs. Cameron related the histories of several pieces, but her conversation was mainly of those parts of America which she had visited in her younger days.

The hour passed pleasantly. Doubtless it had its moments wherein the oddness of the situation occurred to one or other of the four people; but in such an atmosphere of unaffected hospitality was no growth for real embarrassment. Only towards the close of the meal did Cameron, who, naturally, had appeared more at home than his friend, seem at a loss—and it was but momentary.

The hostess had not yet partaken of wine, but now she raised her glass of claret and, with a gravely inquiring glance at Cameron, extended her hand unwaveringly till it was athwart the bowl of water and pansies. Withdrawing it without haste, she drank. Marjorie repeated the act as though it were a matter of course. And then Cameron, as solemnly, if not as gracefully, followed suit, while Wilder tried not to stare.

The ladies rose. From the sideboard Marjorie fetched a silver casket containing cigarettes, a little spirit-lamp, and matches on a tray.

'Flora will bring you coffee,' said the hostess, 'and you must not hurry over your smoke. Come to the drawing-room when you are ready. We can play bridge, if you like, and perhaps my granddaughter will sing to us.'

Wilder, holding the door as they passed out, looked for an instant into the dark eyes of the girl, and saw something very like an appeal. Somewhat dazed, he returned to the table.

'Bring your chair nearer,' said Cameron, and went on in a lowered voice, and not without emotion: 'The unthinkable is before us! Old man, I take back what I said on the moor this afternoon.'

'I'm afraid I'm mystified,' murmured his friend.

'What? Didn't you understand?' Cameron made a gesture

in the direction of the silver bowl. 'They drank to *The King Over the Water*! We are in the house of a veritable Jacobite!'

After a pause—'But you did the same, Cameron.'

Cameron smiled drily. 'A mad moment, for which I shall probably be sorry. For I know nothing about modern Jacobitism—would hardly have credited its existence an hour ago—and now I shall have to play a part, or hurt that dear old lady, our hostess.'

'I begin to understand,' said Wilder. 'But who is that?'—pointing to the portrait.

'Didn't you guess? Why, that is the Young Chevalier—Charles Edward Stuart—Prince, or Pretender, as you choose to call him. Highly idealised, no doubt.'

'You can't be sure of that,' said Wilder quickly. 'Why grudge the man his good looks?'

'Whose eyes are you looking through?' Cameron asked teasingly. 'It is you who ought to have passed your glass over the water! But, seriously, I feel myself in a hole.'

'We shall be gone to-morrow,' Wilder returned, with an inward sigh. 'At any rate, I do not imagine that you will be expected to join in the silent toast at breakfast.'

'The night is not over. I detest bridge, but I hope the game may start the moment we adjourn to the drawing-room. If not, I must trust to you to keep our hostess in close conversation.'

'H'm,' muttered Wilder, thinking of a pair of dark eyes. 'By the way,' he went on, 'have you noticed that arm-chair—the one with the cord?'

'Another relic of the "Forty-five," I should say. Charles was much in this district both before and after the downfall at Culloden. But as a fugitive he did not, if I remember my history at all, enter a decent house.'

'Oh, history! What does history know about it? I can see the poor man, all rags and weariness, sitting there and being served with wine, as I was served this afternoon. No one too fine to wait upon him!'

'Well, I daresay stranger things have happened in this house,' Cameron allowed, and just then the maid came in with the coffee.

Cameron need not have dreaded the hours in the drawing-room. There was nothing in the hostess's manner to suggest that she had found in him an adherent to the Cause.

For an hour or so they played bridge; then Marjorie, at her grandmother's request, went to the piano. She sang one or two

songs of that year's publishing ; then at a word, in Gaelic, from the old lady she put away the music, let her fingers stray over the keys awhile through old Highland melodies, and drifted, as it were, into songs of the Jacobites, to which her low voice was singularly well suited.

The ill-starred Charles failed dismally to win back his father's kingdom, but he and his adventure inspired songs—tender, uplifting, despairing—that shall be sung when the last dynasty is dust.

As he listened, Wilder began to understand certain things. He was no sentimentalist, and some of the songs were not new to his ears, though till now he had sensed from them nothing save pathetic words and haunting tunes ; but to-night his soul caught a faint echo from the souls of those who had made and sung them, of those who had hearkened and wept, so many years ago, when thousands of men, and women too, lived and died for a man—or was it only an idea ?—called Charles.

Wilder's imagination, which had but groped on the moor that afternoon, now began to grasp the tragedy, mystery, and romance of these mountains, lochs, and glens. He glanced at Cameron, who was attentive, but seemingly quite unaffected by the songs. Less openly he glanced at his hostess, and saw a tear on her cheek. For himself he would have been the last to deny that he was moved.

The singing ended, and Mrs. Cameron rose to retire. Very graciously she bade good-night to her guests, saying to Cameron, 'Ranald will help when you are ready for bed. You must not try to put your foot down for many days.'

Marjorie went with her, but returned to say, 'I hope you will both sleep well, though I have ventured to put some books in your rooms. Good-night again.'

'Cameron,' said Wilder, 'those old songs fairly got me. I'm half a Jacobite already.'

'She has an excellent voice,' said Cameron, without enthusiasm.

Ranald came in with decanter and glasses, also the cigarette casket.

'My leddy's compliments, and will you be pleased to smoke.'

'Thanks,' said Cameron. 'We shan't keep you waiting more than half-an-hour.'

'At your pleasure, sir,' said the man, going out.

Wilder threw himself back with a sigh. 'I shall be sorry to go to-morrow.'

'I daresay !' growled his friend.

'Is your ankle hurting badly ?'

Cameron's reply was inaudible. It would seem that something was irking him beside his ankle.

At the end of fifteen minutes they rang for Ranald.

Later Cameron looked at the three volumes under the lamp on the table at his bedside.

'By jove,' he exclaimed cheerfully, 'they're all about the Pret—Prince, I should say. Very thoughtful of Miss Cameron. . . . I think I'll read a bit. Yes, thanks ; everything I want. Good-night, old man. Sorry to have spoilt your tour.'

Wilder's room was upstairs. The first thing he did on entering was to inspect the three volumes at his bedside. All were novels of the day. For a moment he felt hurt.

'Am I to be an outsider ?' Quick came another thought—'Did she see through Cameron at dinner ?'

Absently he opened a book and saw 'Marjorie Cameron' boldly written on the fly-leaf. And if that was all he read that night, he read it religiously.

While being assisted by his friend to dress, Cameron confessed that he had read till three in the morning.

'I fancy I could pass a pretty stiff examination on Prince Charlie—not that I'm likely to be put to the test before we leave.'

'If you are, wouldn't it be better to tell the truth ? It was a natural impulse on your part, and she would understand and forgive.'

'But it would hurt her.'

'Not so badly now as a blunder later on.'

'There isn't going to be any "later on,"' said Cameron, and added under his breath, 'Worse luck !'

He was wrong, however.

At breakfast Marjorie offered her grandmother's apologies and occupied the place of hostess. Towards the end of the meal she became grave, and suddenly said, 'I hope you will not think me forward or interfering if I suggest that you stay here till Mr. Cameron's ankle is recovered, or, at least, for another week or so. When my grandmother comes downstairs she will ask you to stay. Don't imagine that your refusal would offend her; but please believe that your acceptance would be very good for her. I will try to explain.' She paused, and it was evident that she strove for composure.

'My grandmother is older than you may guess : she is eighty.'

four. The present month holds for her the most sad and terrible associations. In the last July of the war her two remaining sons, and all her grandsons, were killed. My father and brothers were among them. . . . She is wonderfully brave, but in those recent Julys we—my mother and I—have feared for her. Since the war we have persuaded her to stay with us in the south, but this summer she insisted on coming to her old home. Until the arrival of a telegram, yesterday morning, we had expected guests—young people—to spend the month. She said very little, but I was filled with dread.'

After a moment's silence the girl, with a broken little laugh, said, 'I don't mind telling you that last night I regarded Mr. Cameron's accident as a direct act of Providence! . . . And now I hope you understand me. There is not a great deal of amusement to offer you here. Still, for Mr. Cameron it might not be worse than his rooms in the City, to which he has proposed returning; and for Mr. Wilder there is good fishing, if he cares for it. For you both the carriage is always there—a car could be got for long distances—and, if you are interested, there are many spots where history or tradition has been made which we should be proud to show you.'

She rose. 'So will you, please, think it over till my grandmother appears?'

With a friendly nod she made for the door, which Wilder sprang to open, while Cameron silently cursed his inability to do the service.

Then the two friends looked at each other.

'Well?' growled Cameron at last.

Wilder regarded him kindly. 'Old man, it's for you to decide. I'm your guest on this tour, you know.'

'Nice tour!'

'I'm in your hands, anyway.'

'We're both in the hands of—'

'Mrs. Cameron?'

'I wonder!' said Cameron caustically.

'At all events, if we stay,' said Wilder, with some extra colour, 'Mrs. Cameron will be, to some extent, in our hands, and it will be up to us to devote ourselves to her.'

'I wonder just what you mean by that, Wilder?'

For an instant Wilder looked like resenting the other's tone. Then he stepped forward and laid a hand on Cameron's shoulder, saying, 'Whatever happens, my friend, we are not going to quarrel. Are we?'

'Lord forgive me for a sulky rotter !' said Cameron, catching at the kindly hand. 'Besides, a girl like her is almost certain to be engaged already—though I noticed this morning that she doesn't wear a ring.'

Wilder refrained from mentioning that he had noticed the same the previous evening.

'So you will accept the invitation ?' he said.

Cameron's smile was grimly humorous. 'Having spoilt your walking tour, what else can I do ? . . . Would you mind going to the bedroom and fetching me the "History of the Rebellion" ?'

The period of feminine susceptibility to masculine attentions may be said to extend between the ages of 1 and 100 ; and these two young men did not spare themselves, or each other, in their devotion to their hostess. Marjorie looked on with tender amusement, tempered at times with apprehension regarding Cameron, who, she feared, might overdo his part, for now her grandmother and he held frequent conversations on the subject so near to the old heart. While Marjorie did not blame Cameron for his joining in the 'Over the Water' ceremony, she wished he had refrained ; he had enough tact, she believed, to have made the pretence unnecessary.

As for Wilder, when he began to finger the many Jacobite books in the library she frankly begged him to desist.

'As an American, Mr. Wilder, you could never become a sincere sympathiser. Listen, by all means, to my grandmother's stories, but leave books alone. My grandmother will tell you intimate things not written in books. She was a Cameron before she married my grandfather. Indeed, in our branch for many generations a Cameron has always married a Cameron. You can therefore believe that a great number of her ancestors fought for Prince Charles. One of her great-grandfathers was his close friend ; another was executed at Carlisle. And when she was little more than an infant she was taken to see a very aged relative who, as a little boy, had run errands for the Prince ; and he held her in his arms and blessed her, and gave her a silver cup which the Prince had used. Why, she could hardly help being a Jacobite—could she ?'

Said Wilder diffidently, 'And does she look for a restoration of the Stuarts some day ? There is a king, or a queen, somewhere, isn't there ?'

'Yes ; but only a descendant of Charles the First—Charles Edward left no heir. But I doubt whether my grandmother thinks

much of the future ; she speaks only of the past. I daresay you find something rather absurd about it all ?'

Wilder shook his head. 'There are many religions in the world, Miss Cameron, but not one I would smile at. And the world of to-day could do very well with the loyalty to ideals and courage and endurance which your people simply squandered on their belief a hundred and eighty years ago.'

The fine eyes regarded him approvingly, and encouraged he said, 'So you must not doubt my sympathy. I am an American. I have Scottish blood in me, though I'm ashamed to confess that—'

Their talk was here interrupted, a fact which was to prove unfortunate before long.

The days passed quickly and pleasantly. Mrs. Cameron insisted on personally conducting the excursions and picnics till Wilder feared for her over-exerting herself. But Marjorie assured him to the contrary, saying, 'It is keeping her from brooding. She sleeps the whole night long and has none of the awful visions of former Julys. As I have already said, you and Mr. Cameron were sent by Providence.'

'Both of us ?' asked Cameron, with a laugh that did not ring true. 'Wilder didn't twist an ankle.'

'No ; but he found the house—and as I heard you tell my grandmother, Mr. Cameron, you would have looked for help in the opposite direction.'

'He has his generous moments,' said Wilder good-humouredly.

In the evenings they played bridge, listened to tales of their hostess, and finished with music. It having come out that Wilder was a fair pianist, he played the girl's accompaniments, which Cameron openly called taking an unfair advantage.

At the end of a fortnight Cameron was able to hobble about with a stick, and he and Wilder held consultations concerning the dangers of out-staying one's welcome. But Mrs. Cameron would not hear of their going—unless they were tired of the place.

'Your holiday has still ten days to run,' she said. 'You are saving a young girl from having a dull time, and making an old woman friends with life again.'

A few evenings later, in the drawing-room, she produced an old autograph-book. A glance through it would have disclosed many distinguished names. She handed it to Cameron, who entered his signature.

'Donald !' she read aloud ; 'and a very good name ! It is high

time I knew what your mothers call you ! Now, Mr. Wilder, if you please !'

He wrote and returned the book.

'John Murray Wilder,' she read—and her face seemed to stiffen. She closed the book and laid it aside.

'My friend,' said Cameron, 'has been too modest to mention his Scottish blood.'

'Yes, yes. Murray is Scottish, but not Highland. If you will give me your arm, Mr. Cameron, I should like to show you something in the other room.'

As the door closed the dismayed Wilder looked at Marjorie.

'I'm so sorry,' she said. 'If only I had known. Perhaps I ought to have let you read the books after all.'

'But what is wrong, Miss Cameron ?'

'I suppose I must tell you,' she said reluctantly. 'If there is one name that my grandmother hates it is the one you have written.'

'May I know why she hates it ?'

'Of course, you will not take it personally,' she returned, with a faint smile. 'John Murray of Broughton was the Prince's secretary, and I think he was faithful to begin with. But after Culloden he became the arch-traitor of the Cause. He turned King's evidence and saved himself by sacrificing gallant gentlemen to the scaffold. It was said of him that he preferred living a dog's life to dying a man's death. . . . Forgive me, Mr. Wilder. It is a thousand to one against his being an ancestor of yours ; and even if he were——' She paused. 'Try to bear with my grandmother. It was probably a shock to her.'

'Yes, I can understand that,' said Wilder, endeavouring to hide his hurt. 'It must have been a shock to discover that she had been entertaining a person of so sinister a name. But I can't understand why Cameron——' He broke off. 'Tell me what I ought to do.'

'Why, nothing. My grandmother will soon see that she has been unreasonable. Don't expect her to beg your pardon, but just try to forget as, I am sure, she will forget.'

There was silence till Wilder said, 'As a matter of fact, I've been bothering about my name. The day after we came here, I wrote to an aunt who used to concern herself about our family history. She would think me crazy, for I asked her to cable the names of the distinguished members of our family in the year 1745. You see—with a rueful laugh—'I hoped we might have some connection with Prince Charlie. But now——'

'Why despair?' she asked. 'There was another Murray—Sir George—who was Charles's leading general, and did splendidly, though he is not a hero of my grandmother's. But there were many hundreds of Murrays in Scotland.'

Mrs. Cameron returned with her favoured guest.

'I have received a great honour,' Cameron solemnly announced: 'I have been permitted to sit in Prince Charles's chair.'

'An honour given to few,' remarked Marjorie, a little coldly, as Wilder fancied. 'What about a game of bridge?'

The old lady shook her head. She felt tired and would prefer music.

The evening passed less blithely than its forerunners. Cameron alone appeared free from constraint. It was evident that the hostess was striving to be 'nice' to Wilder, and Wilder felt humiliated accordingly. Marjorie sang indifferently and briefly. With her grandmother she retired early.

As she was helping the old lady to bed she said gently, 'Granny, what's in a name?'

'Everything! I'm sorry for that young man, but—'

'Do you know, dear,' Marjorie interrupted, 'I'm beginning to think there's nothing in a name—nothing at all.'

'What? Nothing in your own name, and mine? Was ever a Cameron a traitor?'

'I wonder!' said Marjorie, but it was to herself, and she apologised and abandoned the subject, hoping her indiscretion might not spoil her grandmother's rest.

Downstairs Wilder expressed his intention of going for a walk.

'Don't wait up for me. The door is never locked, you know.'

Cameron looked at him. 'Anything the matter, old man?'

'Thanks—nothing. Good-night.'

'Hold on a moment. In the other room Mrs. Cameron was asking things about you—oh, in the kindest way—and I assure you I gave you a pretty good character.'

'I'm obliged,' said Wilder, and went out.

The lamps had not yet been brought in, and Cameron watched his friend swing down the road in the twilight.

'Yes,' he reflected, 'I suppose I might have given him a hint; but all's fair . . .'

He turned, for Marjorie had entered.

Wilder walked the better part of a mile ere his thoughts cooled

and clarified. He could have struck Cameron ; he had been sorely tempted to tax him with disloyalty. Now he determined to await the overdue cable's arrival before saying anything. He was hurt to the quick by such treatment from the man whose friendship and sincerity he had never questioned. Had he but known the significance of the 'Murray' in his name, he could so easily have suppressed it, not just for his own sake but out of consideration for the feelings of the old lady for whom he had developed an affectionate regard.

He threw himself on the heather by the road-side. The whole situation was most difficult and depressing. He was desperately in love with Marjorie—he had loved her in the first hour of their acquaintance—and he could see no hope for himself. He was an outsider, not rich, the bearer of a despised name. What hope, indeed, of winning this Jacobite girl guarded by this Jacobite old lady ? He remembered Marjorie's words : 'In our branch a Cameron has always married a Cameron.' And yonder was a Cameron, wealthy, good-looking, and in high favour with the old lady, ready enough to marry Marjorie ! Hopeless, without a doubt ! The right thing to do, he told himself, would be to take his departure in the morning. Yet, he wondered, could that be done without distressing the hostess, whose sense of hospitality, he felt certain, was in no wise changed, and hurting Marjorie, who was always so solicitous for her grandmother's peace of mind ? If only the cable would arrive in the morning, and form an excuse for his going—

Even as the thought passed through his mind, a man came round the bend of the road. It was still light enough for recognition.

'It is yourself, Mr. Wilder ! Well, well !' said Ranald. 'I was at the village, and they gave me a wire for you. Be pleased to excuse the delay, but they are not hurrying themselves at the post office when they think the message is not important. And now I will be getting home to put the whisky in the drawing-room.'

'Don't wait up for me, Ranald.'

'Well, well, it is a fine evening, and I mind when I, a young man, would be lying on the heather till the dawn.'

'Sleeping ?'

'No, sir ; just half-thinking and half-dreaming of love and the great things I would be doing someday.'

With a friendly laugh Ranald went his way.

Wilder read the message.

'Only distinguished ancestor, John Murray Broughton Secretary young Pretender.'

'My luck, I suppose,' sighed Wilder.

It was long after midnight when he returned to the house. He opened the door quietly, stepped cautiously into a subdued light, and saw Marjorie.

It was he who was taken aback.

'Grandmother was wakeful, but she is sleeping now,' she said softly.

'I'm sorry,' he whispered. 'I'm afraid it was my fault.'

'Mine. Something I said disturbed her.' Marjorie dropped her eyes. 'Please don't think me too forward, but Ranald told me he had given you a telegram. . . .'

His gaze was grateful. The door of the lighted drawing-room stood open.

'May we go in for a minute or two?' he asked, and she entered.

He handed her the message, noticing that she was pale.

She read, and said—'Do you mind?'

'Mind! . . . Yet what does it matter?'

'The truth always matters. But you need not have told me the truth—shown me this. You could easily have said—'

'Not tell *you* the truth! Why, Miss Cameron, what do you take me for?'

'I'm afraid you take me for a very interfering person, Mr. Wilder. But I did want to know—the truth.'

There was a pause till he said—'I must be guided by you. Am I to tell Mrs. Cameron?'

'Yes.'

He bowed. 'I had thought of leaving you to-morrow on the strength of a cable received. Of course, in any case I ought to go. My staying would put a strain on Mrs. Cameron, which—'

'You are not giving her credit for any sense of justice. Try to remember that she is very old and, if you will, prejudiced, and that she cannot weigh things on the spur of the moment. But she is just, though she is a Jacobite. I have told you that she did not sleep till a little while ago.'

'But not on my account! Something you said—'

'Something I said—on your account.' Marjorie's pallor was less noticeable. 'Now, please, let it go at that. I give you my word that her feelings towards you are as friendly and kindly as they were before you wrote your name. You are as welcome as ever. Try not to doubt it.'

'I might have known that she would be generous, and I thank you for your—your intercession on my behalf.'

'How terribly formal! Besides, I didn't exactly intercede for you. It wasn't necessary.'

'Would you—if it had been necessary?'

'I should have to consider that question. You are looking very tired, Mr. Wilder. Please sit down. I have more to tell you. Will you not take whisky?'

He shook his head, placed a chair for her and took one for himself, saying—'Forgive me, but I must seem remarkably stupid. Does Mrs. Cameron really wish me to remain in her house?'

'She really does, and I'm sure it would depress her to lose both her guests.'

'My going need not mean Cameron's.'

'Nor Mr. Cameron's yours.'

Wilder stared.

'I'm trying to break it gently,' she said a little uneasily. 'Mr. Cameron found that he must catch the early train from Arisaig, which would mean a painfully early start from here; so Ranald has driven him to the station inn. . . .'

'Cameron gone!'

Marjorie nodded. She was sorry for Cameron. He had asked her to marry him, and she had coldly asked him why he had allowed his friend to remain in ignorance of a certain outstanding fact in the 'History of the Rebellion' which he had studied so carefully. . . . But all that was her secret.

'Yes, Mr. Wilder. Seemingly he had to go. He hoped you would not think of shortening your stay here, and said he would write. Ranald will act as his valet and see him comfortably settled in the train. I'm afraid the news has distressed you.'

'Did he, too, have a telegram?'

'One must imagine so, though he did not mention it.'

'I wish he had not gone like that,' said Wilder. 'I confess I left him in anger, but there may be some explanation of—'

'He will write, you know. And now—' she rose.

'Yes, I have kept you too long. But tell me—does Mrs. Cameron know he has gone?'

'I had to tell her. It was a blow, but I took her a nice little note from him which seemed to soothe it. Poor grandmother! Will you desert her also?'

Wilder wavered where he stood. He had suffered so many emotions.

'I am at her service and—yours,' he said suddenly. 'At the moment, everything of the past weeks seems unreal. I—I don't want to go. But I'm afraid to stay . . . and, Marjorie, I think you must know why!'

'It is very late,' she faltered.

'I love you!'

'Oh!'

'I'm sorry, but I had to tell you. And now, how can I stay?'

Marjorie seemed to have no suggestion to offer; her eyes were on the cablegram which she was methodically folding into a cocked hat.

'I can't pretend that I don't love you,' he went on, 'and Mrs. Cameron would see it, and it would be horrible for you—you would both wish me gone then.'

The clock struck four.

'Oh, this is dreadful!' she murmured.

'I know it is—quite hopeless. For a Cameron has always married a Cameron—has she not?'

Marjorie retreated a step. Her lips moved silently for a moment or two before she replied, almost inaudibly—

'Yes, Mr. Wilder, in the p—ast.'

'And a Jacobite a Jacobite?'

'I—I don't know any real J—Jacobite except Granny.' And she retreated another step—and another—and yet another.

At the third he followed; at the fourth he caught her hands.

'Oh, Marjorie!' said Murray.

'Oh, Murray!' said Marjorie.

WILD LIFE IN THE LONDON DOCKS.

VERY few people, except those whose business takes them there, have any idea of the charm to be found in the great enclosure which the Port of London Authority has put up for many miles along the river-front from London proper to the estuary of the Thames. Enclosed in this great area a number of animals and plants live, sheltered in a great measure from interference owing to the great wall of the palisade, and it would surprise many people if they could know what interesting and often beautiful sights are to be seen in the near neighbourhood of London.

Once beyond the actual City, and after leaving Barking, the country opens up more and more, and within the palisade are great stretches of land, mostly low-lying, with large tracts of water bordered with reeds where wild fowl build their nests ; and in the evening these sheets of water reflect the setting sun, and hedged in by their tall fringes of reeds you can easily fancy yourself in some wild and desolate place far from the haunts of men. Rabbits play about in the rough ground near, and there is plenty of food for them, for there are large tracts of ground covered with grass and weeds of endless description. One of the most interesting features of the whole place is found in the number of strange foreign plants which can be seen growing, and sometimes flowering, here, brought, no doubt, by the ships which are busy unloading along the quays and docks on the water's edge. One day, for instance, I found a gully filled with the flowering plants of the castor-oil, with its red and yellow blossoms. It is true they had dwindled in size since they had been brought by some ship from Africa ; but they had managed to survive, and here for several years in succession I found the quaint flowers, which are probably there now, ever dwindling in size yet strangely reminiscent of the rough river-bed from which they came in the days when they were brought from their African home in some packing-case.

These cases are frequently broken open on arrival, and one sees multitudes of tiny plants of unknown species coming up in all likely and unlikely spots. Thousands of tiny seedlings of linseed sprout between the trolley-lines which run along the quay-sides, only to be crushed, but always trying afresh to obtain a footing there. One man who lived in the docks amused himself during a season or two by planting unusual plants round his little wooden shelter, and

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'Yes, Mr. Wilder, in the p—ast.'

'And a Jacobite a Jacobite ?'

'I—I don't know any real J—Jacobite except Granny.' And she retreated another step—and another—and yet another.

At the third he followed ; at the fourth he caught her hands.

'Oh, Marjorie !' said Murray.

'Oh, Murray !' said Marjorie.

WILD LIFE IN THE LONDON DOCKS.

VERY few people, except those whose business takes them there, have any idea of the charm to be found in the great enclosure which the Port of London Authority has put up for many miles along the river-front from London proper to the estuary of the Thames. Enclosed in this great area a number of animals and plants live, sheltered in a great measure from interference owing to the great wall of the palisade, and it would surprise many people if they could know what interesting and often beautiful sights are to be seen in the near neighbourhood of London.

Once beyond the actual City, and after leaving Barking, the country opens up more and more, and within the palisade are great stretches of land, mostly low-lying, with large tracts of water bordered with reeds where wild fowl build their nests ; and in the evening these sheets of water reflect the setting sun, and hedged in by their tall fringes of reeds you can easily fancy yourself in some wild and desolate place far from the haunts of men. Rabbits play about in the rough ground near, and there is plenty of food for them, for there are large tracts of ground covered with grass and weeds of endless description. One of the most interesting features of the whole place is found in the number of strange foreign plants which can be seen growing, and sometimes flowering, here, brought, no doubt, by the ships which are busy unloading along the quays and docks on the water's edge. One day, for instance, I found a gully filled with the flowering plants of the castor-oil, with its red and yellow blossoms. It is true they had dwindled in size since they had been brought by some ship from Africa ; but they had managed to survive, and here for several years in succession I found the quaint flowers, which are probably there now, ever dwindling in size yet strangely reminiscent of the rough river-bed from which they came in the days when they were brought from their African home in some packing-case.

These cases are frequently broken open on arrival, and one sees multitudes of tiny plants of unknown species coming up in all likely and unlikely spots. Thousands of tiny seedlings of linseed sprout between the trolley-lines which run along the quay-sides, only to be crushed, but always trying afresh to obtain a footing there. One man who lived in the docks amused himself during a season or two by planting unusual plants round his little wooden shelter, and

here one could see flax with its pretty blue flowers, hemp, anise, dill, and many of the spices which the ships bring with them. Once, too, I found numbers of datura plants in flower, scenting the air as they had done in their Eastern home, and once a sheet of henbane in far larger quantities than I have ever seen anywhere else, unmolested here from year to year. Fennel, too, grows in vast quantities, unplanted as far as anyone can tell, for no houses have been known to have stood here.

One day I was watching a reedy gully which bordered a little stream for the sake of observing the great numbers of sedge-warblers who were building their nests in the swaying reeds, when my attention was caught by a flower I had never observed there before, and I found it to be a beautiful gladiolus brought, no doubt, in some case from the Transvaal or another of its native places, and after the first I saw there were several there, they having established themselves in the moist soil which caught all the sun it could manage, and indeed the plants seemed to be doing well. Many beautiful natives grow in profusion here also, such as ragwort, which is found in dense masses and in the season is covered with the ringed caterpillars of the Cinnabar moth, which in summer fly in vast numbers in the docks, making bright scarlet and black specks in those solitudes. Other beautiful moths and butterflies love the docks. I have seen Copper butterflies settling on the great flowers of the convolvulus, and indeed I never saw this flower elsewhere, growing in such beauty as it does here. Sometimes it covers the ground for a long way round with huge white or pink bells, or it will be the small variety but with a wealth and profusion of flowers difficult to realise. Succory, too, makes many a bare patch of ground beautiful, while in the season toadflax absolutely covers the ground for great distances. One more beautiful effect must be mentioned, for in the autumn starwort runs along the creeks and canals like lines of blue fire; and these are only a very few of the flowers to be seen so near the heart of London.

In the spring-time the air is literally filled with the songs of birds. Larks are to be found in great numbers in spite of the increasing number of cats which run wild in the docks and prey upon the birds they catch. Black-headed buntings are common here, and robins and wrens, and along the river-bank you can always see long lines of gulls and terns feeding on the edge of the tide or resting on the roofs of the warehouses and other buildings.

The best time to observe the wild things is on Sunday, when the

docks are still and no huge vessels are being unloaded as a rule ; few people are about then, and it is possible to have an early ramble and scarcely see a soul from start to finish. In the distance you can hear the sound of church bells, but they do not disturb the peace of the whole place, and the birds can be heard singing in chorus any fine day. There are few trees it is true, but there are numbers of hawthorns and some crab-apples which in their season make a beautiful picture, and it is odd, too, what curious things from all parts of the world can be picked up sometimes. One day I found a Chinaman's hat thrown away, and once I saw a row of German helmets put on the young rhubarb plants which one of the officials had planted in a row in a quiet spot.

Not long ago the papers reported that a Frilled Lizard from Australia had been found on one of the little railway lines which run from the docks—I expect it had come over in some goods where it had stowed itself ; and I once found a most curious insect, like a gigantic hornet, which had been concealed in a huge bunch of bananas which had come from South America in the same way. Once, too, I saw a beautiful Bird-Wing butterfly flying about the docks, having hatched out in one of the warehouses after lying hidden like any other stowaway until the right time came. These foreign visitors look very much out of keeping with our climate, and probably do not live long. Thus, I once saw some bales from East Africa unpacked at the quays and they were full of a little, green, tropical beetle ; but next day these all appeared sluggish, and the following day not one was alive as far as I could see.

Many strange foreign things are brought into the docks almost every day. Now and then it is a load of beautiful ornamental woods from the East, and once a ship came in laden with spices from the Moluccas and they scented the air for a long way round for some days, making breathing a delight ; and more than once I have picked up some valuable ivory nuts from South America which had fallen from one of the sacks or cases in which they had been brought to England ; it is in this way that so many foreign plants take root here. And sometimes the holes in the sacks are made by rats which had bored into them for the sake of making their nests inside ; and when the sacks are sewn up or the cases are repaired, it frequently happens that a whole family of rats is doomed to perish, for the mother cannot get back to feed them. I saw a sack of rice opened one day which contained the dead bodies of a family of black rats, for these, the indigenous rats of England, are fairly common still in the docks, though gradually being exterminated by the brown or Hanoverian rat.

In order to cope with the rats, cats were introduced into the docks long ago by the Port of London Authority, and by this time they must be considered as part of the 'wild life' there, for they belong to no one and keep themselves. They produce their kittens beneath some pile of old timber of which there is much lying about the docks, and have grown so numerous now that they are becoming a pest. Added to which they have so few enemies to fear—dogs not being admitted except in rare instances—that they do not trouble to get out of the way for anything, nor will they take the trouble to climb up the trees or palisade if danger threatens. Indeed I have seen one cut in two by a passing train, since they will not even get out of the way of these; still, upon the whole they lead a care-free life.

I saw a very pretty sight one day. A vessel came in from South America and berthed at the 'New Dock,' that is, the one built out near the river with a great stretch of green land in front, and here a great number of foreign birds were landed, many of them so tame that they were not confined but were climbing about among the men; some of them were being sold cheaply by the crew, and you could see lorries and parrots of many kinds, as well as other species, fluttering about among the English foliage. It was a sunny summer day, and the effect of the brilliant plumage of the birds was very striking.

Once, too, I saw a number of animals intended for the Zoo being landed, and the elephant was swung far above the water in a sling, while a camel made much more fuss, and both then walked through the streets on their way to their new quarters.

From a S. American ship also two curious animals escaped and wandered about the enclosure for some days before being captured. They looked like gigantic guinea-pigs rooting about among the grasses and reeds and seemed to be enjoying themselves immensely, but they were ultimately caught and restored to their owner.

But among the natives must be reckoned the hedgehogs which, with the rabbits, must have been enclosed when the palisade was put up, for neither could get in now; and these can often be seen at dusk coming out of their seclusion and hunting for insects or snails and adding a touch of real country near the heart of a great city; and indeed when the sun is setting and its red light is reflected on the quiet ponds in their fringes of reeds, it is difficult to believe that just beyond the great barrier live millions of human beings, so peaceful is the scene which no sound disturbs except for the birds which are singing their evening songs.

W. L. PUXLEY.

INDEPENDENCE DAY: A SKETCH-BOOK.

BY PHILIP GUEDALLA.

IV.—THE RIGHT HON. EARL OF CHATHAM.

THERE is a charm in endings. Slightly, perhaps, in poetry, but more acutely in public speeches and the longer forms of musical composition one becomes aware of it. The dying fall, the *envoi*, the peroration strike upon grateful ears; athletes become almost interesting in their last lap; curtains, which rose in silence, fall to applause. For it is always an ending, rarely a beginning, that we welcome. The start of a horse-race is a tepid spectacle; but the finish stirs multitudes. Playgoers, indifferent to the opening moves, demand a happy ending. And who (with deference to Motley) would open *The Rise of the Dutch Republic*, when he could read *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*? The taste for endings is a human instinct. All the world will watch a sunset, while sunrises are abandoned to the insincere appreciation of a limited and self-conscious sect. Gray, with consummate art, began his *Elegy* with an ending; and the last words of statesmen are more eagerly awaited than their finest speeches.

A great man, one feels, is never greater than when he is no longer present. His origins are dull; his career is blameless. But greatness grows upon him, as the shadows lengthen. The night draws on; and when a still figure faces a sinking sun, it takes on the dignity of an ending. Such phases have a rare charm. Napoleon on the island, his tired nephew among the trees at Chislehurst, the slow decline of Gladstone draw the fancy by their vague outlines. Perhaps they lingered too long and died too late. But is there half the charm in Wolfe and Nelson, in Robespierre and Danton, who died in time and never aged? That is why one wonders that Lord Rosebery, who has felt the fascination of Napoleon's last phase and spent a lifetime in his own, left Chatham's undescribed.

It was the oddest epilogue. The young hero, who startled the world into admiration in Sir Robert Walpole's time by a free use of the epithets 'execrable' and 'flagitious'; the Rupert (if one may

borrow the compliment) of debate, who was 'the meteor' of the House of Commons, who stung—in the alarmed hearing of young Mr. Walpole—'like an angry wasp' and, mixing comedy with his 'Gorgon's head,' towered into ridicule, which 'lasts and rises, flash after flash, for an hour and a half,' and left his dazzled hearer gathering up 'the glittering splinters'; the minister who for five incomparable years persuaded his countrymen to share his strange confidence 'that I can save this country and that nobody else can,' and rewarded them with the steady boom of the Park guns announcing victory; the conqueror, who won America in Germany and India in both; the unchallenged master of his country, who kept the Bath crowd standing whilst he sipped his water in the Pump Room, and had become (with the Tower, Blenheim Palace, Stowe, and the Quakers) an object of interest to enquiring foreigners; this amazing constellation of success was curiously dimmed by failure in its later phases. That figure never lost its strange attraction; the nose was masterful to the end; and the piercing eye—that eye which, in Shelburne's phrase, 'would cut a diamond'—alarmed his latest hearers. But as he withdrew into the equivocal half-light of his closing years, his unrivalled armoury seemed somehow to become ineffectual. Within ten years of his salvo of victories little Mr. Walpole could write disrespectful things about 'an old beauty in an unfashionable dress' and 'old Myra in her fardingale.' Such irreverence would have been unthinkable in 1760, whilst the lightning played about the mountain from which he issued his commandments. But ten years later the same lightning was somehow a less alarming spectacle. He still flashed and thundered. But perhaps the rocks were riven a shade less frequently. The awful mountain itself was sometimes invisible in drifting clouds; and there was a growing feeling that the storm was muttering at a safer distance. For he had taken, by his triumphant conduct of the Seven Years War, his place in history; and it is not altogether easy for an historical character to play a lively part in current politics. That deprivation was, in a sense, the price which he paid for his transcendent glory. He had chosen to rival successfully the achievements of the Elizabethans, and in doing so he had attained to something of their remoteness. He had scaled his pedestal; and eager contemporaries hardly look to statues for advice. Yet as his energies declined, he resisted the immobile dignity of marble; and for fifteen years his country was afforded the strange spectacle of an effigy from Westminster Abbey in active politics. It was a queer, sometimes a terrifying vision.

Perhaps he had always been a little like the statue of the Commander. His epistolary style, indeed, was never anything but marmoreal. But in his later manner the resemblance positively grew upon him, as he moved stiffly to his place, glared around, and launched upon a hollow speech. The alarming episode continued until his last mutter died away in the House of Lords. The unnerving figure, with its tormented eyes almost invisible below the peak of a great wig, was so indisputably a *revenant*, that few observers would have started if it had clanked a ghostly chain. For there is about all his later speeches an oddly posthumous quality. They seem like half-remembered quotations from himself ; there is almost an air of *pastiche* about them. Even to himself, one feels, he must have seemed unreal. Indeed there was in his last phase a conscious effort to depict an Elder Statesman. He had almost ceased to be a man and become a magnificent impersonation. The nods, the piercing stares, the careful lighting, the oracular utterance seem to come rather from the baroque imagination of a romantic actor than from the instincts of an elderly English gentleman in poor health. He was posed ; he was draped ; he was lit ; he was almost set to music. In those accomplished hands the crutch and flannels of his infirmity became incomparable 'properties,' as the huddled figure sat mumbling his mysterious lines. What a part it would have been for Sir Henry Irving, if Lord Chatham had not played it.

This strange decline began early. Even in his great days, when the guns were still banging in the Park for victories, he was almost intolerably odd. The Pitts were unpleasantly remarkable for their oddity. The family abounded in strange, explosive sisters ; and an elder brother was muttering somewhere abroad over an interminable grievance. So it was not surprising that the King's minister comported himself like the Mogul ; and every spring his country's business waited upon his annual illness. But the nation, never quick to detect eccentricity in high places, seemed to notice nothing ; although already a squib was faintly irreverent about *Gulielmo Bombasto de Podagra*, and politicians were inclined to be a trifle sceptical when at awkward moments he 'gave himself a terrible fit of the gout' ; someone, indeed, was even found to doubt whether it was 'a real or political fit.' But the mass of his countrymen, to whom a symptom always connotes a fund of inexhaustible enjoyment, appeared to find the impressive mechanism of his ailments almost endearing ; since an embittered satirist could complain that

' The very *doorkeepers* it touches
To see him tottering on crutches.

The groundlings cry alas ! poor man !
How ill he is ! how pale ! how wan ! '

That is a very British cry ; and it may be wondered that no other statesman has so triumphantly exploited the national taste for pathology. Even in time of peace, one feels, a reasonably ailing minister must have been in an exceptionally strong position. But in war-time, with laurels showering in three continents like leaves in an autumn gale, the valetudinarian was quite impregnable. His crutch became a standard, his flannels a banner ; and his pervading oddity passed muster for the trifling mannerism of a national champion. For nations are strangely uncritical of successful war-ministers.

But with peace the world became more critical. There was, as yet, no visible decline of his powers. The flow of thought was unimpeded ; the head, when necessary, was erect ; the voice was still full, as when

' He woo'd the fair with manly sense,
And, flattery apart,
By dint of sterling eloquence
Subdued Corinna's heart.'

But, lacking his favourite 'thorough-bass of drums and trumpets,' it began to seem a shade less resonant. Perhaps the gaunt figure had been more telling against the familiar background of war. Seen on a peaceful stage, it had something of the futility of a gentleman portrayed in a martial attitude before a velvet curtain ; the stern eye, the hand upon the sword-hilt in the foreground seem to demand a charge of cavalry, some drifting smoke, or a few floating spars in the middle distance. Without them, Pitt was a little lost in the first years after the peace. Even his admirers hardly knew what to applaud ; and soon an irreverent caricaturist could depict a swathed, majestic foot emerging from an inn door at the sign of 'Popularity the blown bladder by W. P.' Popularity, indeed, had been strained a little during the war by his pension and his wife's peerage. There was a tendency to deplore this solicitude for 'a paltry annuity, a long-necked peeress, and a couple of Grenvilles' ; and the alarming tribune was never a conciliatory figure. But victory was a rare substitute for popular graces ; and Pitt continued

surprisingly to woo the affections of his countrymen with a manner that appeared to have been borrowed from Marius in the ruins of Carthage.

But with the peace he became merely enigmatic. The London mob, having no further victories to cheer, turned to the equally congenial exercise of hooting ministers. Its exclamation was, on the whole, correct ; since the King's servants were inefficient and not particularly constitutional. But as mobs almost invariably reach the right conclusions for the wrong reasons, it hooted upon the oddest grounds. Believing Bute to be a Scotsman (which he was) and the King's mother to be immoral (which she was not), it roared against Prerogative ; and for these singular reasons George's dismal experiment in personal government became unpopular. It deserved, indeed, to become so on more rational grounds. For England in 1763 had outlived the need for autocracy. There was a growing habituation to the forms, at least, of self-government ; and the Eighteenth Century was no place for Tudors. This odd experiment in monarchy provoked a popular reaction, and the City became a slightly unexpected home of English liberties. Deep-voiced aldermen harangued their liveries on Magna Carta, and the Guildhall echoed with the indignant eloquence of Common Councillors. The City had always been the stronghold of Pitt's popularity, and resistance to an encroaching monarchy might well have provided suitable exercise for a Great Commoner out of employment. But the strange man made no movement. The crowd was left without an adequate leader ; and mobs, which wished to cheer for liberty, were forced by Pitt's default to shout for Wilkes.

He was, indeed, curiously disabled from heading the opposition to the King ; since he shared his strange heresy. Both men, for different reasons, disbelieved in party. Pitt's vision was of a nation united behind its minister ; the King's, behind its king. In either dream the restless figures of British politics were to be conducted to a non-party Nirvana of beatific immobility, a static condition in which Pitt (or the King) should preside eternally over an unprotesting state. So both were equally averse from 'faction,' as opposition is invariably termed by persons to whom it is distasteful. Non-party men are rarely believers in active opposition, since they intend to be perpetually in office ; and Pitt had once prescribed that 'true political moderation consists in not opposing the measures of Government except when great and national objects are at stake : to oppose upon any other foot is certainly faction.' It was his firm

belief that 'every man ought to show himself for the whole . . . Be one people !' So he was disinclined to systematic opposition and not unduly shocked by George's attempt to substitute the Crown for party. A further cause, perhaps, kept him immobile. The King's return to Tudor habits might scandalise his contemporaries ; but it need hardly scare a statesman who was so manifestly an Elizabethan minister astray in the Eighteenth Century. For Pitt, one feels, must have been more at home with Burleigh than with Mr. Burke. He faced the French in the defiant temper which had once confronted Spain ; he sent his sailors round the world upon errands which would have been congenial to Drake ; and it need hardly shock him, if there was a touch of Tudor in his king. Indeed, he saw the mysterious glory of the Crown too plainly to appreciate the fine shades of the Whig doctrinaires. His irritable sovereign might call him 'a trumpet of sedition' ; but after the first wild oats of his early opposition he seemed to become a monarchist of almost religious intensity, leaving office at the King's pleasure, accepting it only upon his willing invitation, and parading a tremendous deference to royalty in the Closet, where scared courtiers watched the slow descent of that imperial nose to meet those ailing knees. The King stirred in him some of those sentiments, which were later inspired in Mr. Burke by the more impressive spectacle of Windsor Castle. It was a romantic fascination that is fairly comparable with Mr. Disraeli's. He saw the embodiment of his country in a stout young man with prominent eyes ; and, seeing it, the old mystic was rarely capable of marked dissent.

So the eager mob was defrauded of its natural leader by Pitt's strange convictions. For such sentiment and such genuflexions were scarcely compatible with brisk opposition to the Crown ; and his voice was barely audible above the growing tumult of the years, in which Mr. Wilkes made democracy disreputable. Successful demagogues are rarely unaccountable ; and that, to an impatient observer, was precisely the quality of Pitt's keen, but tangential, mind. Even Shelburne noticed how greatly he 'depended on taking quick turns, which was his forte.' Crowds love to follow ; but they rarely follow an elusive scent. They prefer their leaders labelled in plain figures ; and no label was secure for long on Pitt. First visible to his countrymen in spirited opposition to the Crown, he had recurred in respectful service to it. Crossing the stage with a lively denunciation of European wars, he had re-entered hastily from the opposite side and directed, without a change of make-up,

the most successful campaigns since Marlborough. He seemed to disdain the practice of consistency, that easy virtue, which provides dull politicians with a convenient substitute for judgment. Perhaps he scarcely needed it himself : one does not ask a Major Prophet to be consistent. But a touch of this common quality would have been so helpful to his supporters. For it is unfortunately true that in politics consistent mediocrities are simpler to follow than Major Prophets. Pitt had, indeed, his steady vision of public service. It burned bright above the roaring streets and the flushed faces in the House of Commons ; it gleamed uncertainly through the trees at Hayes ; and he followed it like a star. But the crowd, seeing only the strange windings of his political course, watched him a little sadly and began to doubt.

It was, indeed, bewildering to observe the Great Commoner living amiably under the King's experiment in autocracy. He was rude in his stately fashion, to Mr. Grenville. He boomed vaguely about the liberty of the subject and the impropriety of general warrants (of which he had issued three). But he roared them so gently that three times in the two years which followed the peace he was invited by his sovereign to form a ministry. That, one feels, is the surest evidence that Pitt was harmless. His harmlessness, indeed, increased with failing health. His gout became a ruling passion ; Bath was the centre of his universe, where he could 'crawl to the pump' and sip his water ; and soon he was known, as Mr. Walpole said, 'only by tradition.' Out of doors the world of men moved up and down with cheers for Wilkes and groans for Bute. But Pitt was fading silently into the half-light of sick-rooms. Sometimes the hand, sometimes the foot gave trouble ; forks and pens became awkward implements ; and at intervals he felt strange cravings to be left alone in silence. But as he failed, there was one topic that seemed to engage his wandering attention ; Mr. Grenville, harassed for revenue, had taxed America ; and Pitt, who had saved, had even in part created the empire, held strange opinions on the subject. They drummed in his head, as he lay in his bed at Burton Pynsent or stared gloomily at the elegant regularity of the Bath crescents. His opinions, his empire, his colonists haunted the sick man's mind through the summer weeks, when those lively tax-payers were burning stamped paper in Boston at one shilling the sheet folio. But his strength revived at the turn of the year ; and in the first days of 1766 he came to town to 'deliver his mind and heart on the state of America.' That topic engaged him for the remainder

of his life ; it was the theme of the last movement, a strong thread of melody which ran through the strange discords of twelve jangled years. He was old ; he was ill ; he was not (the fault was his own) attached to any party. The gaunt figure seemed to start on a lonely adventure by a failing light. Almost, since he had always seemed an odd survival from an earlier time, he might have worn armour ; a lance would hardly have been surprising in that hand. He rode (for Pitt was always spiritually on horseback) alone and slowly ; and as the challenge of that angular figure came up against the sky, his nickname had never fitted 'Don William Quixote' more wickedly well.

So, with distressed America for his Dulcinea and grotesquely squired by one of his aldermen, Pitt set out on his last ride. He never finished the adventure. The opinions of this amazing champion were oddly compounded. He believed 'that the Parliament has a right to bind, to restrain America.' He maintained that 'we may bind their trade, confine their manufactures.' But he insisted 'that this Kingdom has no right to lay a tax upon the colonies.' A more logical mind might, perhaps, have found some difficulty in reconciling this faith in the fiscal freedom of the Americans with his fierce insistence upon 'the power of Parliament . . . known in the colonies by the prohibition of their carrying a hat to market over the line of one province into another, or by breaking down a loom in the most distant corner of the British empire in America ; and if this power were denied, I would not permit them to manufacture a lock of wool or a horseshoe or a hobnail.' For his resistance to American taxation was founded upon a doctrine of British sovereignty, which in General Gage would be regarded as an outrage upon liberty. But it was Pitt's merit that he was never logical. British institutions rarely yield their secret to logical minds ; and in his greatest utterance he rose superior to all reason and proclaimed a triumphant faith in the co-existence of an irresistible force and an immovable post. So when he followed his insistence upon sovereignty with a hoarse ejaculation that 'I rejoice that America had resisted,' and by way of practical advice quoted, in a gentler voice,

‘Be to her faults a little blind,
Be to her virtues very kind,’

this glorious blend of two incompatible doctrines with a policy inconsistent with either was more than logical ; for it was right.

His cryptic message was delivered within the limits of a single debate ; and a bewildered ministry of his disciples endeavoured to execute it. The Stamp Act was repealed ; but since the Whig intelligence was unequal to the subtlety of his conviction that a sovereign Parliament with absolute authority to prohibit manufacture could not impose a tax, the repeal was accompanied by a reassertion ‘ that Great Britain hath and ought to have full right and power to bind the Americans in all cases whatsoever.’ He blessed the repeal, insisted once again upon his curious distinction, and left for Bath ; whilst grateful Americans drank toasts, preached sermons, and voted statues in his honour. There was a gratifying tumult in the streets, although the cheers had perhaps more reference to his past victories than to his present opinions ; and ministers showed an almost pathetic anxiety to carry out the lightest, most enigmatic wish of the alarming hierophant, who was to call them with amused contempt ‘ the gentle warblers of the grove.’ But before he went he expressed, with an odd revulsion to his old ideals of government, a singular ‘ wish, for the sake of our dear country, that all our factions might cease. I could wish that a ministry might be fixed, such as the King could appoint and the public approve ; that in it men might be properly adapted to the employments they are appointed to, and whose names are known in Europe, to convey an idea of dignity to this Government both at home and abroad. If ever I were again admitted, as I have been, into the Royal presence, it would be independent of any personal connection whatsoever.’ This seemed ungrateful to the Whigs ; but the King, detecting the non-party note, discerned in Pitt the natural successor of Lord Bute and Mr. Grenville. Pitt might be tiresome, held strange views upon America, and was more than a little odd. But he seemed at last a model minister for that Patriot King, who was to ‘ espouse no party . . . but govern like the common father of his people ’ ; and within ten weeks the Whigs were out, and his eager sovereign, taking Pitt fatally at his word and confident that he ‘ will zealously give his aid towards destroying all party distinctions,’ watched with his large, unwinking eyes the old man bending low over his hand.

It was from the first a tragic business. One seems to see Pitt’s last ministry, through a thickening air of failure, as his Hundred Days. It opens with the same desperate improvisation ; it ends in the same silence of defeat. At the outset a failing man in a perpetual fever assembled his colleagues, that singular array which

provoked Mr. Burke to his riot of metaphorical joinery. An Earl of principle was ' whimsically dovetailed ' with a broad-minded Duke; a sound lawyer was worked into the pattern somewhere; and the dull surface of his Treasury Bench was richly inlaid with the iridescence of Charles Townshend . . . 'here a bit of black stone and there a bit of white. . . .' The party system was challenged by a miscellany which nothing but its leader's name could render acceptable; and, with the sudden gesture of a tired man, he changed it. A loyal ballad-monger might complain that

‘ The Tories, ‘od rat ‘em,
Abuse my Lord Chatham,
For what—for commencing a peer.’

Yet their emotion was not surprising. For Pitt in 1766 was still popular, a reigning toast. But who was Chatham? A new peer, a stranger, who accepted favours from the King and had an irritating tendency

‘ To be America’s nabob, sir.’

With a strange diminution of popularity he took charge of the country: and for five months he steered his own course with a firm touch. Guns, frigates, Continental allies, and the corn supply made an agreeable tumult in his mind, whilst eager colleagues crowded round Privy Seal with pens and paper to take his Olympian decisions, and Townshend walked out of Cabinet muttering, ‘ What inferior animals the rest of us appear.’ But before the year was out he was becalmed; the great vessel lay on the water, and there was scarcely a movement. The world went on; brisk Mr. Townshend settled the affairs of India, sparkled through his ‘champagne speech,’ and devised a most ingenious tax on tea in American ports. It was, for Colonial affairs, a fatal interlude. But Privy Seal lay at Bath; sometimes he muttered to a friend by the bedside, sometimes he dictated a majestic note for ministers to a lady with anxious eyes. Once he got as far as London and crouched in a dim room at Hampstead, where a scared colleague saw a huddled figure bowed over a table. He still hoped to work, to see the King, to meet his Cabinet. But soon it was the eclipse. He sat for days alone, starting at sounds, staring at quiet fields in Hampstead. He took little solitary meals at irregular hours, and craved for silence. Across the sea America was strangely disordered. But Privy Seal sat in his little room, gripping a table; his hands were always on

the table, and his head was on his hands. His sad-eyed lady wrote his letters, faced the world, kept the house hushed for him, and came when he rapped his stick on the floor. He was quite gone now, and she acted for him under a deed ; they say that when he signed it, he sang a little. The dreadful time trailed on ; until at last they let him resign, and his Hundred Days were over.

In the last phase (for he recovered) he was irregularly seen, like one at a great distance. The voice came faintly down the wind and was lost again. He was like a storm still muttering below the sky-line. Once he came to Court and scared his sovereign by his resurrection. Ministers, in full cry after Mr. Wilkes, heard the blind tapping of a familiar crutch and looked nervously behind them. The House of Lords was startled by a hollow voice, which spoke about Magna Carta and ' those iron barons—for so I may call them when compared with the silken barons of modern days.' He seemed to have his strength again, spoke night after night, and drove past Mr. Burke's at Beaconsfield in a tandem, followed by twenty servants and his family in two coaches and six. Then, remembering that he had once been called ' Mr. Secretary Cortez,' he scented some distant impertinence of Spain in the South Atlantic and swooped like an eagle. He deferred with elaborate irony to ' Spanish punctilio, indeed ! ' and woke strange echoes of the Seven Years War. But the clouds drifted down again ; and when the mountain was seen through another rift, he was writing verses to Mr. Garrick upon the pleasures of the country. He rode, bred pigs, and chartered Sir Joshua to paint all his friends for the ball-room. But he still seemed to watch America, where Lord North was reaping the dismal harvest sown by Mr. Townshend when Privy Seal lay mute at Bath. He made deep-chested speeches upon liberty and taxation and the duty to ' proceed like a kind and affectionate parent over a child whom he tenderly loves ; and, instead of these harsh and severe proceedings, pass an amnesty on all their youthful errors ' ; he begged ministers to withdraw the troops and drafted plans of conciliation with Dr. Franklin. But the niceties of American jurisprudence were beginning to concern him less than the menace of France. That perpetual danger (had he not conducted the French war ?) haunted his mind, and he flung a warning arm to where ' France, like a vulture, is hovering over the British Empire, hungrily watching the prey that she is only waiting for the right moment to pounce upon.' Then the night closed in again ; and for two years the world went on without him,

except for a dying statement of his political faith dictated to the doctor, to whose heroic prescription of Hock, port, and Madeira, unaccompanied by exercise, he owed, perhaps, the continuance of his malady.

Seen for the last time, he passed magnificently from the shadows into the lighted centre of the stage ; and the melody, which had trailed so long in minor keys, seemed to sweep into the major. He was breaking fast. But he found his voice again ; and as the Lords strained to hear, he spoke less like an ex-minister than as the Chorus of a tragedy. The hollow voice comes faintly from those last debates, with its dreadful burden of doomed fleets and defeated armies . . . 'an end to this country . . . you cannot conquer . . . driving them before me with this crutch . . . traffic and barter with every little pitiful German prince that sells and sends his subjects to the shambles of a foreign prince . . . the tomahawk and scalping knife of the savage . . . my Lords, if I were an American as I am an Englishman, while a foreign troop was landed in my country, I never would lay down my arms—never' (one can almost catch the old man's gasping emphasis) '—never—never.' He thundered and lightened ; but still the war went on. On the last day of all he staggered to his place, held up between two young men, like a dying prophet. The voice was very faint now. But he was still speaking ; and the tired mind seemed to run on the old danger across the Channel . . . 'an ignominious surrender . . . prostrate before the House of Bourbon . . . if we must fall, let us fall like men.' It died away. A Duke was speaking. Then the old man stirred and fell back with his last speech strangled in his throat. So he died almost in public ; he could not, one feels, have planned it better. For his death, like his life and his opinions, was magnificently obvious.

LITERARY ACROSTICS.

THE Editor of THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE offers prizes to the value of at least £3 to the most successful solvers of this series of four Literary Acrostics. There will also be consolation prizes, two or more in number: the winners of these will be entitled to choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue. And, further, every month a similar prize of books will be awarded to the sender of the correct solution that is opened first.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 28.

(*The Fourth of the Series.*)

'Just then flew down a monstrous crow,
As black as a tar-barrel;
Which frightened both the heroes so,
They quite forgot their quarrel.'

1. 'It was not in the battle;
No _____ gave the shock.'
2. 'No one who has once heard the _____ can fail
to reproduce it in imagination.'
3. 'These people possessed a method of commun-
icating their _____ and feelings to one another
by articulate sounds.'
4. 'One shall _____ thine eyes; another shall
Impearl thy teeth.'
5. 'Sweet souls, grudge not our _____,
But let the dying mourn their dead.'
6. 'Inexorable Death shall _____ all,
And trees, and stones, and farms, and farmer fall.'
7. 'Hold me but safe again within the bond
Of one immortal look!'
8. 'A most complete character, for he had first
been a professor of rhetoric, and then became
a soldier.'
9. 'Timid girls _____,
With wond'ring looks, to gaze upon his face,
And on his cataract of golden curls.'
10. 'Thy coffin had the cope of night for pall,
For torch, the stars along the windy sky!'

RULES.

- Only one answer may be sent to each light.
- Every correct light and upright will score one point.
- With his answer every solver must send the coupon that is printed above 'Book Notes' on a later page.
- At the foot of his answer every solver must write his pseudonym (consisting of one word), and nothing else. His name and address should be written at the back.
- Solvers must on no account write either the quotations or the references on the same paper as their answers. It is not necessary, or even desirable, to send them at all.
- Solvers who write a second letter to correct a previous answer, must send the complete solution as they wish it, and not merely state the desired alteration.
- Answers to Acrostic No. 28 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE, 50A Albemarle Street, London, W. 1, and must arrive not later than June 20.

POEM: Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, iv. 3.

LIGHTS:

- Cowper, *Verses supposed to be written by Alexander Selkirk*.
- Dryden, *Alexander's Feast*.
- Southey, *St. Michael's Chair*.
- Barham, *The Ingoldsby Legends A Lay of St. Nicholas*.
- Byron, *Childe Harold*, iv, 181.

Acrostic No. 26 ('Stanch Strong'): There were 253 answers sent in, of which 218 were entirely correct, 27 were partly correct, and 10 did not conform to the rules. The fifth light was the only one in which all the solutions were correct.

The first correct answer that was opened came from 'Mutt,' and she wins the monthly prize. Miss Coubrrough, The Cleves, Troon, Ayrshire, is entitled to choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue.

THE SIXTH SERIES.

Answers were sent in by all the ten solvers for whom the Special Acrostic ('Liss Enid') was set. Caw, Mopsea, Omar, and Wynell were entirely correct, and to each of them a prize of £1 is awarded; Edumis, Etheldreda, Heb, and Roman missed one light, and they will receive books to the value of £1, to be chosen from Mr. Murray's catalogue; Avia scored three points, and Azor scored two. The Goldsmith light was found by every one.

Caw is Miss Anderson, 19 Atholl Crescent, Edinburgh; Mopsea is Miss M. C. Barnard, 45 Manor Road, Beckenham, Kent; Omar is Miss E. M. Oram, 1 Bolingbroke Grove, S.W. 11; Wynell is Mr. E. W. M. Lloyd, Hartford House, Harley Wintney, Hants; Edumis is Mr. S. B. Repton, Crowthorne, Berks; Etheldreda is Miss B. S. Franey, The Grange, Ely, Cambs.; Heb is Mrs. Herbert Bruce, 57 Cardiff Road, Llandaff, Cardiff, S. Wales; and Roman is Miss S. K. Phelps, 8 Ormonde Mansions, 100A Southampton Row, W.C.

These eight winners will be debarred from taking any of the prizes awarded during the seventh series, unless it should happen that one of them is the only solver to send a correct answer to any one particular acrostic.

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